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The Mennonite Quarterly Review

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EDITORIAL

BROTHERHOOD LIVING AS IT HAS BEEN PRACTICED IN THE MENNONITE CHURCH requires the face-to-face primary relationships which are found in small well-knit communities, where concern for the common welfare, love for one another, and mutual aid can find the fullest expression. The brotherhood spirit has not only led to the establishment of Mennonite "colonies" on a large scale, as in South Russia, but has made the small compact rural community the typical form of Mennonite settlement throughout four hundred years of history. This type of living has been a major source of strength and a powerful factor in the group solidarity which has enabled the Mennonite Church to meet successfully (in part at least) the encroachments of modern secular culture as well as the persecutions of earlier centuries. It is also in part the secret of the great success of Mennonites in colonization in many lands.

Among the prophets of modern Mennonitism who see the Mennonite community as a tower of strength to meet the challenge of modern secularism as well a source of power to revitalize the church as a whole, Winfield Fretz stands in the front ranks. His appointment in May, 1943, by the Mennonite Central Committee to a job of study and research in preparation for more effective service to Mennonite C.P.S. men in post-war rehabilitation has led him into a careful study of Mennonite colonization. This work, added to his previous thorough study of Mennonite mutual aid, has given him an understanding of resources and techniques for successful Mennonite community building which will be of great value to the church in the years just ahead. The REVIEW is happy to publish in this issue Dr. Fretz's enlightening report on "Recent Mennonite Community Building In Canada" (largely by immigrants from Russia 1922-30) which is the fruit of his recent visit to a number of these communities.

A SECOND ESSAY IN HISTORICAL AND LITERARY CRITICISM FROM THE PEN of Elizabeth Horsch Bender appears in this issue. It is a careful analysis of Ernst von Wildenbruch's drama, *Der Menonit,* which was published first in 1878. Perhaps no literary production using a Mennonite theme, created such a furore in its day as this rather second-rate drama. As Mrs. Bender points out, however, the German Mennonite protest against the drama was really uncalled-for in the form which it took. Had German Mennonite officialdom been content to condemn the misrepresentation of Mennonite character which Wildenbruch was actually guilty of, instead of going on to insist that the Mennonites were not nonresistant and not nonparticipant in national defense, as they actually did, they would have been faithful both to their character and to their history. Actually the Mennonite protest is a witness to the increasing apostasy from the faith of their fathers. Mrs. Bender's study, based on exhaustive examination of the original sources, does demonstrate conclusively, however, that Wildenbruch failed to do justice to the Mennonites historically, as well as to the literary values of what might have been a powerful dramatic theme, the conflict between patriotism and conscience.

THE LARGE NUMBER OF SUCCESSFUL AND VIGOROUS MENNONITE CONGREGATIONS established in this country in the course of the great immigration and colonization movements of the past two centuries cause us to forget sometimes the considerable number of "lost" and "dead" congregations which once held a place in the life of the American church. The number of these extinct congregations is great; in fact it has been asserted that it equals the number of living congregations. L. J. Burkholder's *Brief*

(Concluded on page 63)

The Mennonite Quarterly Review

Vol. XVIII No. 1

RECENT MENNONITE COMMUNITY BUILDING IN CANADA

By Winfield Fretz

Preface

A commission from the Mennonite Central Committee to study Mennonite colonization efforts, in the hope that light might be thrown on the problem or rehabilitating Mennonite young people in rural areas after the present war, gave the writer an opportunity to visit and observe some of the new Canadian Mennonite communities.* Chief attention was paid to communities that were established by immigrants who came to Canada from Russia between 1923 and 1930. Observation of these communities was considered especially significant for this study because they were on a sufficiently large scale to warrant special consideration and were recent enough to make the experiences and lessons learned by them of practical value for colonization efforts that might be undertaken in the near future. Most of the communities observed were established between 1926 and 1934, and hence sufficiently developed

* I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to the Mennonite Central Committee for making this trip possible; to Mr. C. F. Klassen for his kindness and generosity in giving his time and the use of his car to transport and guide me to the important places and people in British Columbia, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Ontario; to T. O. F. Herzer of the Canada Colonization Association for his interest and counsel; and to the many good friends in every community who acted as my generous hosts during my stay in their communities. J. W. F.

to permit one to observe trends and predict the outlook for the future.

The fact that most of the settlers in these new communities were on about the same economic level when they arrived makes it fairly easy to assess community economic progress since arrival in Canada. Of the 20,201 immigrants who came to Canada during this period 6,176 were able to pay their transportation in cash; 675 could pay half their transportation, and 11,349 had to come to Canada on credit. Those able to pay their own passage usually had very little cash left with which to buy equipment for their households and farms.

The degree of economic, social, and religious progress of these newly established Mennonite communities and their everyday activities and organizations should be of considerable interest to Mennonites generally and of particular significance to the whole study of Mennonite colonization.

It was naturally impossible within the short space of six weeks to study carefully all the more recently established communities, much less many of the older ones. It is hoped, however, that the communities observed will be fairly representative of those not visited. No effort is made at comparison of the various communities, nor at a description of each community in detail. In this article it is rather the intention to point out some of the more interesting and significant observations made in a few of the larger, more successful, and recently established Mennonite communities in Canada.

Ontario

Practically all of the Mennonite immigrants from Russia to Canada in the period from 1923 to 1930 landed in Eastern Canada, and many of them found shelter and employment for the first few months or years on the farms of the Swiss-South German Mennonites who had been established in Ontario for well over a century after migration from eastern Pennsylvania in 1800-1820. Most of these immigrants gradually shifted to the prairie provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, where land was cheaper and settlers more in demand. Some of them, however, remained permanently in southeastern Ontario on the Niagara Peninsula or in Essex County, and some of those who went to the prairie provinces later returned during the depression years.

The two Mennonite communities visited in Ontario were Vineland and Virgil, two small settlements on Lake Ontario about twenty miles northwest of Niagara Falls. Vineland is the center of an (Old) Mennonite settlement which has become very prosperous as a fruit-growing area. The prosperity of the older settlers was a major factor in attracting the newer Mennonite immigrants. Those who had remained in Ontario from the beginning worked first as hired laborers and saved what money they could eventually to buy their own farms.

It should be mentioned that the newer Mennonite immigrants changed the agricultural pattern of these communities somewhat by farming on a more intensified basis. Many of the older settlers, while growing fruit, also cultivated fairly large acreages in diversified farming. Grapes and cherries were two of the chief fruit crops. Partly because of necessity the newer immigrants developed a way of making a living on a much smaller acreage. Large farms were purchased and divided into five, ten, and fifteen-acre plots. These in turn were purchased by the immigrants on what came to be called "Mennonite terms." This meant ten per cent of the purchase price as down payment and the remainder on subsequent annual installments. In many cases the initial payment had to be borrowed at local banks at a high rate of interest, sometimes as much as 7 percent.

The purchasers of these tracts of land were exceedingly eager to become owners of their own homes, and in order to accomplish this they were willing to start out on a very simple plane of living. The dwelling house, generally a small one or two room building of a temporary sort, often a mere cabin or rude shack, was later used for a chicken house. Fruit trees and vegetables were immediately planted and while waiting for these to mature and bear fruit, the husband, the older boys, and in quite a few cases even the entire family, would work as day laborers in surrounding communities wherever work could be found. The combined income of the family provided sufficient means to provide the simple needs of food and clothing and meet the financial obligations incurred in the purchase of the small plots of land.

Repeatedly the writer was told by settlers how difficult and trying those early years in Canada were for them. It was with a sense of just pride and genuine satisfaction that many of them looked back over the past ten or fifteen years and observed the rewards of

their labors. For through their tremendous sacrifices, hard work, and undaunted faith in God, these people to a large degree became self-sufficient in their own homes and on their own land. Not all these settlers have prospered economically and spiritually, but it is the estimate of the writer that well over fifty per cent of the recent immigrants are today owners of their own homes, and many others are near that goal. When one considers the short period of time that these people have been in Canada, this is very commendable, especially since the percentage of ownership in many old American communities is not greater, or even as great.

Religion plays a very important part in the lives of these communities. There are two Mennonite churches in each of the two communities under consideration both established by the newcomers, a General Conference Church and a Mennonite Brethren Church. In addition there is one (Old) Mennonite church in this area, established about 1800. The churches serve as much more than a place of public worship; they are the dominant institutions in the community and serve as cultural, educational, and social centers as well. Both community groups place strong emphasis on teaching the Bible and the German language by the church. Time is set aside during the week for the promotion of these activities. As is the case in the other Mennonite communities to be discussed later, the church is the center round which other community interests are organized. Such matters as health and medical care, burial societies, and fire and storm insurance are generally organized around the church.

It is significant too that the collection of the remaining transportation debts still owed to the Canadian Pacific Railway is at the present time being successfully achieved through the persistent efforts of C. F. Klassen of Winnipeg who accomplishes it through the local Mennonite churches. In brief, this is done by making the local Mennonite community responsible for the sum total of individual debts outstanding in a given community. The local community raises the funds and retires its obligation to the C.P.R., and then collects from the local debtors if possible, and if not, the loss is spread over the entire community. Most members agree to this plan because they consider it worth a considerable amount of money to keep the long-standing tradition intact, namely, that "Mennonites pay their debts."

Economically the Mennonite immigrants in the Vineland and Virgil areas have prospered in their fruit growing enterprise. One of the reasons (as well as an evidence) is the establishment of a large consumers' and producers' co-operative with two branch associations. The original one is located at Virgil, with one branch at St. Catharine's and another three miles from Virgil. Fruit was being grown in such quantities that it became difficult to market it fresh without loss due to spoilage or to lowered prices at the large canneries. In an effort to remedy this problem one of the more economically successful settlers undertook to establish a cannery in the community of Virgil.

The growth of the Vineland-Virgil community is as phenomenal as is the growth and prosperity of the cannery. The first Mennonite settlers came to Virgil in 1935 when it was a small hamlet with scarcely more than a dozen houses. In 1943 there were approximately 300 Mennonite families in the Virgil community with an estimated total population of from 1,200 to 1,500. In the Vineland area there are approximately 240 recent immigrant Mennonite families with an estimated population of 900 to 1,200. The rapid growth in population is due to the influx of Mennonites from the prairies. The Mennonite Brethren congregation at Virgil is composed largely of Mennonites who have moved in from Hepburn, Saskatchewan. It is a case where almost a whole community is being transplanted. An indication of the success of the cannery, which was established in 1940, is given in the following annual production figures: 1940—$27,000; 1941—$97,000; 1942—$351,000; 1943—$500,000.

In 1942 the Mennonites in the vicinity of Virgil earned approximately $40,000 in wages by working at the cannery and sold approximately $100,000 worth of goods to the cannery. The capital investment in this enterprize at the present time is $85,000. During the busy season in summer and fall this cannery employs about 200 women and girls and about 50 men. This industry is privately owned, but a considerable share of the capital is owned by local Mennonites.

The future outlook for the Mennonites in these two communities is promising. If the residents continue to co-operate in meeting their consumer, producer, and marketing needs they will have a decided advantage over those areas where little community co-operation is practiced. With the favorable climate and a continued market

for their goods there is good reason for optimism as to the future. It is gratifying to notice that as the economic situation improves so do the homes. The remodeling, repainting, and landscaping that are going on reflects a love of home and family life. The majority of people with whom the writer spoke were happy, optimistic, and above all thankful to God for the blessings they now enjoy after years of privation and suffering in Russia, and to some extent in Canada.

Coaldale, Alberta

The only Mennonite community visited in Alberta was that at Coaldale, about fifty miles north of the Montana border at Glacier National Park. T. O. F. Herzer, general manager of the Canada Colonization Association of the Canadian Pacific Railway, urged a visit to this community because he felt that it was unique in that it was more completely planned in advance of settlement than any of the other Mennonite communities with which he was associated. It proved to be a profitable visit.

Practically all of the Mennonites now living in Coaldale came from Russia in the years from 1924 to 1926. The first Mennonite family to settle in Coaldale arrived in 1926. The Canadian Pacific Railway was very much interested in getting settlers for this community because it had heavy financial investments in an irrigation project for that general area. Also it had encouraged the erection of a sugar refinery in the town of Sterling which to prove profitable required a sufficient supply of beets. Up to 1926 the C.P.R. had had difficulty in attracting Mennonites to Coaldale. Even when it appealed to the Mennonite Board of Colonization at Rosthern, Saskatchewan, for some of the newly arrived immigrants it was refused. The reason for the refusal was that the Mennonites were unfamiliar with irrigation practices and the Board hesitated to recommend Coaldale on that account. Four Enns brothers and a Mrs. Gerhard Janzen were the first Mennonites to buy land here and they came in spite of the Colonization Board.

These first families were attracted to Coaldale by the high wages that were being paid for workers in the beet fields. High wages looked good to impoverished newly arrived immigrants. The original plan of these first families was to work in the beet fields during the season and then return to the older Mennonite settlements from whence they had come. But instead of leaving they were

persuaded to remain and in 1926 bought 320 acres of land at $80 an acre on condition that 150 acres of it would be planted in sugar beets. Other settlers were more easily induced to come to this settlement after this start had been made. The C.P.R. offered Mennonites sixteen 80 acre farms on condition that the farmers would promise to raise a certain amount of sugar beets and give the crop from ten acres of beets to the C.P.R. each year as principal and interest on the farms until they were paid. The settlers were also granted $400 in cash for the erection of buildings by the C.P.R. as a part of its program of settling farmers on an "assisted plan." Of the sixteen farms that were offered on these conditions fourteen were taken by Mennonite settlers immediately.

From 1926 to 1943 the community of Coaldale grew steadily to the present Mennonite population of 267 families and 1,477 souls. There are perhaps an equal number of non-Mennonites in the area. Coaldale has two Mennonite churches. One is a General Conference congregation with 150 members organized in 1930. The pastor of this church said that only one-third of his members owned land. The remaining two-thirds rented land or worked as day laborers. The pastor rents 110 acres on a half share basis. The second church is the Mennonite Brethren congregation. It is the larger of the two, having approximately 600 members. There are perhaps an additional twenty-five families living in the area who are not members of either church but who are nominal Mennonites.

In this community as in others visited the church is the dominant institution. The whole of Mennonite community life is centered in and around the church. There is hardly an activity that does not have its source or its culmination in the church. A local Bible school is conducted five months of the year in a separate building located on the grounds and adjacent to the large new Mennonite Brethren meetinghouse which has a seating capacity of over 1,000. A staff of three teachers gives instruction in the German language along with courses in Bible history and doctrine and a number of academic subjects. The school is supported by both Mennonite churches in the community. The school term runs from November 1 to April 1; the average attendance varies from sixty to eighty students.

One finds a number of significant organizations in Coaldale. Some are cultural, some economic, and others social. One of the most unusual, at least from the standpoint of a Mennonite visitor from the United States, is the "Orts Committee." This organization is

concerned with all local Mennonite cultural activities. It has regularly elected officers, rules, and specifically defined functions. It keeps a record of Mennonite families, the number of children, the births and deaths, the number of people moving in and out of the community from year to year, the transportation debt to the C.P.R., ownership or rental of land, and the amount of crops raised. In general the "Orts Committee" serves as a statistical bureau and fact-finding agency on matters pertaining to local community activities and culture.

An illustration of the work done by this committee is found in the following figures which were taken from the annual report of the committee for 1942. Here we find that among the Mennonites there are 164 farmers, 81 day laborers, eleven business men, three bee-keepers, three teachers, twenty-eight retired people. Since the settlement in Coaldale began 90 families have moved away, 51 of these to British Columbia. Of these 51, twenty-one were farmers and twenty-six were day laborers. The "Orts Committee" transcends all Mennonite branches in the area. It is concerned with Mennonites as a culture group rather than with church members in a single branch of the Mennonite Church.

A further aspect of community organization and an evidence of community solidarity is the existence of a Mennonite Health Society and a community hospital. This was organized to overcome the high cost of medical care which was almost ruinous to the early settlers who needed medical help. The closest town was Lethbridge twelve miles distant, and an ordinary medical doctor's call cost one dollar a mile one way. Tonsilectomies cost 60 dollars and the signing of death certificates 10 to 15 dollars. It was soon evident to the leaders of the community that medical care was far too costly. A health society was organized and group rates were secured from a Lethbridge doctor. As the society grew in strength a doctor was induced to settle in Coaldale. A schedule of rates for complete medical coverage was worked out so that an entire family could have a doctor's care for $9.25 a year. The fee for single people was $6.00 and for widows and other economically dependent individuals $4.50 a year. The fees have now been slightly raised but still offer a great annual saving to the members. The hospital is organized and operated separately from the Health Society. A schedule of economical flat rates is worked out for various services such as major and minor operations and obstetrical care.

The local doctor's report to the members of the Health Society for 1942 indicates that there were 1,936 office calls, 106 home calls, 28 major operations, 71 minor operations, 390 tooth extractions, 33 fractures and dislocations, 57 confinement cases, 4 deaths. When one considers that the health of the community is greatly improved and that overanxiety for want of means to get medical care is removed as a result of this service the wisdom of organizing such a health society is self-evident. In addition the people of the community save thousands of dollars and probably a significant number of lives annually as a result of it. The Society has a membership at the present time of approximately 300.

The Coaldale community also has a Burial Society which was organized in 1943. There is a 50 cents membership fee. Upon death of a member each member is assessed 15 cents. The bereaved family is paid 50 dollars if the deceased is an adult, and 25 dollars if the deceased is a child. It is still the custom in this community, as in many of the other Canadian Mennonite communities visited, for a local man to make the coffin. The fancy hearses and elaborate funeral services familiar to many communities are unknown here. The writer attended a funeral of a young Mennonite man who had been killed in an airplane crash in the Canadian Air Force. The body was brought to the meetinghouse for the funeral service in an ordinary pick-up truck.

Fire and storm insurance is also offered to all residents who want it on the basis of Christian mutual aid. All of these mutual aid societies and practices are part of the cultural pattern which the Mennonites brought with them from Russia.

Practically all the farming in the Coaldale area is done by irrigation. Most of the Mennonite farmers to whom the writer spoke did not seem enthusiastic about irrigation farming. It is hard work and very confining, but one way to be fairly certain of annual crops. One of the factors that explains the lack of enthusiasm for irrigation farming, apart from the hard labor involved, is the fact that quite a number of the settlers were not farmers by training or experience but rather bankers, business men, schoolteachers, and ministers. On the whole one must say that from the economic standpoint the Coaldale community has proved a successful Mennonite colonization effort. It has been blessed with wise, energetic, and devoted leadership.

British Columbia

The Mennonite communities in British Columbia represent the growing fringe of Mennonitism in Canada much like that found in Ontario. Four separate communities were visited and all four are within a seventy-five mile radius east of Vancouver. Practically all of the settlers in these four communities came from the prairie provinces where they were unsuccessful in earning a living after trying it for a number of years following their arrival here from Russia. Most of the settlers also disliked the long, cold winters of the prairies. The climate of British Columbia was much more like that of Southern Russia with which the settlers were familiar. It will be impossible here to describe the life and activities of each of the four communities visited. We shall confine ourselves to the community of Yarrow, which is the oldest of all the Mennonite settlements in British Columbia. Besides the four settlements visited there are small settlements of Mennonites on Victoria Island and in Vancouver.

Yarrow is located sixty-five miles east of Vancouver in the Fraser Valley along the Vedder River. The Mennonites were attracted to this area by an advertisement in the *Mennonitische Rundschau.* The first eight families came to Yarrow in 1928. All eight families lived in a single house along the side of a mountain about a mile from Yarrow for the first three months. Fifty persons occupied this house during the initial settlement period. None of these settlers had any money, but all of them were willing to work. The men and older boys and sometimes even whole families worked in hop fields three or four miles away for as little as 15 cents an hour. They were willing to walk this distance daily and endure these privations in order to earn enough cash to buy food and save enough money for a down payment on land.

The land which the Mennonites bought was part of a 700-acre tract that had been bought very cheaply by a Mr. Chauncy Eckert and his partner, Mr. Crane. Eckert was formerly from South Dakota and there had become acquainted with Mennonites. He sold the land to the Mennonites at 150 dollars an acre in small unimproved ten-acre plots. Most of the land was bought on credit as was the lumber for the rude houses which were at first constructed after regular working hours and on off days. While the price of land was high in comparison with what Eckert paid for it, and to what

other land in the area sold for, it has not proved too expensive in view of the intensified agriculture that the Mennonites began practicing on it. Mr. Eckert, whose partner soon died, must be credited with being one or the most generous and best loved land agents on record. Today, fifteen years after the arrival of the first Mennonites, he is spoken of in the highest terms much after the manner of a beloved old patriarch of a community.

It was the writer's privilege to visit in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Eckert and to catch the spirit of the man and his high ethical motives. He sold most of the Mennonites' land without any down payment and in addition bought the lumber for them on credit. He bought three tractors to break the ground for them and in other ways gave them liberal assistance. When the settlers were too poor to buy livestock and equipment, he frequently bought cows for families so they would have a milk supply. On one occasion he butchered a large 700-pound hog and gave all the settlers portions of it. Later, as their economic condition improved the settlers paid back the credit extended to them. While Eckert is not a member of any Mennonite church nor any other church known to the settlers, he contributed liberally toward the building of the local churches and occasionally attends services at one of the two Mennonite churches in Yarrow. No man is more highly thought of in the Yarrow community than is Mr. Eckert.

The present population of Yarrow, about 99 per cent Mennonite, consists of 250 families and about 1,250 souls. The Mennonite Brethren meetinghouse has a seating capacity of about nine hundred and a congregation of 600 members, and the General Conference congregation has about 90 members. The local community maintains its own Bible school and German academy. German is still the language used in all public gatherings here as throughout Canada among the recent Mennonite immigrants. In the homes the Low German or Plattdeutsch is spoken.

There is a high degree of community and Mennonite consciousness in Yarrow. An interesting and unusual evidence of this is the political arrangement found in the community. A chairman is elected to look after all community affairs and to deal with outside governmental agencies. This chairman is very similar to the "schultz" found in the Mennonite villages in Russia. He with an elected advisory committee performs all civic duties that need to be performed. During political campaigns he speaks for the com-

munity; in matters pertaining to public works, relief, law enforcement, and similar matters he represents the local people. The village is not incorporated and therefore has no legal status but because of the homogeneity of the community it acts like an incorporated body. One might say that it operates more successfully than the ordinary legally incorporated body because it is a voluntary and spontaneous device representing the will of the people. During the depression, instead of accepting public relief, the community asked for the privilege of maintaining its own roads and building its own bridges. With a proportionate share of the taxes it paid its needy people regular wages for working on the local roads and thus avoided giving relief directly.

A further aspect of this community consciousness is reflected in a system of insurance against loss by fire and storm. The community has its own voluntary fire fighting brigade and a system of group insurance. The Halifax Insurance Company made the "Schultz" of the village of Yarrow one of its agents, and because 80 per cent of the people who insure their properties agreed to insure in the Halifax Company the Yarrow Mennonites were given a special rate of one-third less than the usual cost of insurance. This arrangement is advantageous to both the Insurance Company and the policy holders.

As in the case of Coaldale, Alberta, the local Mennonites organized a Health Society, and adopted the group medicine plan in 1935. They have their own young Mennonite physican but they do not have their own hospital. Hospital facilities are provided in the town of Chilliwack, 12 miles away. The regular cost for medical attention for the entire family is 12 dollars a year. An interesting characteristic of the health plan is its Christian concern for the poor in the community. Each church takes out one or two family health contracts in the Health Society. These memberships are held by the deacons in the churches and used for families who are otherwise too poor to buy their own memberships. The present membership in the society is about 250.

Economically the community is prospering. The basic industry is berry growing. Raspberries are the primary and strawberries the secondary crop. People can make a comfortable living on five acres and some make a living on as little as two acres. A factor in the success of the community is its co-operative consumers', producers', and marketing organization. In 1935 a small consumers'

organization was started and in 1937 a fruit growers' co-operative was organized. In 1943 these two organizations were merged into a single organization. At the present time the co-operative has about 300 members. It operates a general store; a feed and grain buying business, and a berry packing and preserving plant.

The latter aspect of the co-operative is especially important because it provides a way for the fruit growers to market their goods without loss from spoilage. Fruit ordinarily is a highly perishable commodity, but with the preserving plant in the community it is possible to handle all fruit which growers cannot market fresh. During the berry season the co-operative trucks pick up the berries at the growers' homes and bring them to the plant where they are washed and cleaned and packed in large barrels and treated with a chemical solution to prevent spoilage. These packed berries are then hauled to Vancouver and sold there or shipped directly to England. The estimated value of the fruit business for 1943 is between 250,000 and 300,000 dollars. So successful is the co-operative endeavor in Yarrow that future plans are under way for the formation of a credit union, a feed mixing and grinding mill, a co-operative egg grading and marketing plant, a creamery and cheese factory, and a jam factory.

The success of the berry business in Yarrow has accounted for the growth of new and allied industries. One illustration of this is the Yarrow box factory which manufactures berry crates and boxes. The industry started in one man's garage and now has grown to the point where a newly erected building has had to be enlarged several times and a newer and larger one is being contemplated. This factory is now making most of the berry crates and boxes for the entire Fraser Valley. It should be said that the evacuation of the Japanese from this area has eliminated some competition in the fruit growing industry, but the Mennonite prosperity in this area cannot be ascribed entirely to that because it flourished before the Japanese evacuation took place.

Sardis, Abbotsford, and Coghlan are the three other Mennonite communities visited by the writer while in British Columbia. Sardis and Abbotsford each have two Mennonite churches, while Coghlan has one. All of these communities are completely rural. They have not concentrated their populations like Yarrow, nor have they developed commercially to the same extent, although Sardis and Abbotsford both have consumers' co-operative organizations. The

population in each of these two settlements is between 800 and 1,000. Coghlan is a small community established in 1934 with one General Conference church and about 150 Mennonites in the settlement.

In all of the Mennonite communities in British Columbia the people are enthusiastic about the climate, their communities, and the outlook for the future. This optimism is reflected in the encouragement they give their friends and relatives in the older communities in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta to move to British Columbia. For the past decade there has been a steady stream of Mennonite migrants from the prairie provinces to the Fraser Valley. This influx is continuing even at the present time. So large is the movement into the area that the older non-Mennonite settlers are becoming alarmed. Articles have frequently appeared in the local papers about "the Mennonite problem." In these articles there is a good deal of sentiment expressed against the Mennonites on the grounds of their objection to military service and that while the non-Mennonite men are away to war the Mennonites take over the farms, jobs, and land. There is no basis for these accusations because in practically every case Mennonites have developed land that was previously unimproved. Since most of them live and work on their own land they have taken away few jobs from anyone in industry. This might be true to a very limited extent of the Mennonites in Vancouver but the two small congregations of Mennonites in that city were there before the war began.

Unless there is direct legislation against the further influx of Mennonites into British Columbia, it is very likely that future years will see the Mennonite population increase here very rapidly. The Mennonites have been able to compete successfully against the older settlers for land and living space. They are willing to work very hard, and at jobs at which many other people are not willing to work; they are culturally solidified and religiously motivated. All of these factors account for the successful colonization efforts of the Mennonites in British Columbia.

Blaine, Washington

While in British Columbia an opportunity presented itself to the writer to cross the international border and spend part of a day and a night at Blaine, Washington, where there is a small settlement of about 25 Mennonite families. Most of these families came from

the states of Oklahoma, Kansas, and Minnesota. The poor leadership, the attitudes of the people, the lack of organization and community consciousness in this settlement, stood out in sharp contrast to the Mennonite settlements just across the border. There was one small Mennonite Brethren church in the midst of the widely scattered Mennonite settlers. The minister had formerly been a traveling evangelist and had moved to Blaine as recently as 1942. He claimed that due to gas and tire shortages on account of the war, attendance on the part of the outlying members was quite irregular. Outside the church there is no other organization of a social or economic nature of any kind that binds the Mennonites in the community together. The few people contacted were not optimistic about the future of this community and seemed to lack any sense of Mennonite group consciousness except in a vague and general way. Most of the Mennonites are small farmers, some of them clearing their land out of cut-over timber acreage and others buying small improved farms. The settlement is located in the extreme northwestern point of the United States along Puget Sound. A more intensive study of the area should be made before final conclusions are drawn as to the probable success or failure of this Mennonite colonization effort.

General Remarks and Summary Impressions

The foregoing account of a six weeks' trip to some of the Mennonite communities in Canada does not include all of the settlements visited. Space forbids the description of the many interesting and significant developments among the various branches of Mennonites in southern Manitoba especially in the areas known as the East and West Reserve originally settled by the earlier Mennonite immigrants from Russia, who came to Canada between 1873 and 1880. In this area one finds a varied assortment of Mennonites. There are Mennonite Brethren, Evangelical Mennonite Brethren, General Conference Mennonites, Sommerfelder, Bergthaler, Old Colony, the Church of God in Christ Mennonite, Rudnerweide, and Hutterites. These groups are settled in intermingled fashion, not exclusive of each other, except for the Hutterian Brethren.

The struggle to keep alive Mennonite group consciousness in the city of Winnipeg is also a worthy subject for further study. At this time there are four Mennonite congregations in the city and two congregations in the suburb of North Kildonan. The latter con-

gregations and their setting are unique in America. The Mennonites living in this suburb of North Kildonan are settled very compactly. There are four or five streets approximately a half mile long on which live only Mennonites. This is all the more interesting because it is not the result of any legal arrangement or design but is rather the spontaneous desire of the recent Mennonite immigrants from Russia to be settled close to each other. The success of this Mennonite group to withstand the disintegrating influences of the city should be observed with great care, but the further implications of this situation cannot be discussed here.

Nor is it possible to treat the large and important subject of the Swiss-South German (Old) Mennonite communities in Ontario and in the sparcely scattered communities throughout the prairie provinces. As stated in the beginning of this article, this was aside from the writer's main interest in this particular study, but nevertheless, should be undertaken at a future date.

There are several over-all impressions that come as a result of this study of Mennonite colonization efforts in Canada. First, is the importance of the church in each community visited. It is the first organization formed in every newly established community, and the meetinghouses are erected sometimes before permanent private dwelling houses. During the years of pioneering hardships and privations the church serves as a veritable fountain of inspiration and a tower of strength.

Second, one is impressed by the fact that the major share of the financial credit necessary to establish these communities comes from non-Mennonite sources such as railroads, land companies, and lumber and cattle dealers. It is the "good name" or reputation of the Mennonites that repeatedly secured substantial amounts of credit for Mennonite settlers without any financial security or economic assets.

Third, one is impressed by the fact that there is so little planning for the establishment of new communities in advance of their actual settlement. In most cases new communities were established as the result of a few families moving into an area and attracting others by their economic success. In this way if a sufficiently powerful combination of factors worked toward a common end, the communities either succeeded or failed. There are some exceptions to this in areas where such agencies as the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization directed refugees to given areas.

Fourth, there is a large degree of co-operation and mutual aid in the various communities. One might almost express this in the proposition that the economic prosperity and strength of a community is in direct proportion to the extent which Christian mutual aid is practiced.

Fifth, Mennonite industriousness and respect for the dignity of labor in the areas observed is inspiring. No task was too menial and no job too difficult for these people to undertake. The Biblical injunction that "with God all things are possible" was directly demonstrated in numerous cases.

Sixth, the sense of cultural isolation due to language, religion, tradition, and cultural heritage, is outstanding in all of the communities observed even in the areas where Mennonites have been in Canada for seventy years or more. This sense of isolation is at the present time accentuated because of the Mennonite attitude toward the war.

Seventh, in at least three different provinces Mennonites have introduced a different agricultural pattern into the areas where they have settled. The intensification of agriculture in the fruit growing areas of Ontario and British Columbia and the truck gardening around the city of Winnipeg are cases in point.

ERNST VON WILDENBRUCH'S DRAMA "DER MENONIT"

An Historical and Literary Critique

Elizabeth Horsch Bender

Ernest von Wildenbruch wrote his historical dramas with the definite purpose of arousing the German people of his time from their indifference toward national affairs to a vital love of country. Toward this end he selected periods of their history which seemed to him worthier and nobler than the present, and presented them to a responsive public without much regard for historical accuracy. It happened that for one of these dramas, *Der Menonit,*[1] he chose a Mennonite setting; the time is the period of the Wars of Liberation (1806-1813), when Germany threw off the yoke of Napoleon's imperialism; the theme is a young Mennonite's conflict between patriotism and conscience; the locale is East Prussia in the neighborhood of Danzig. A resumé of the action follows as a basis for a historical critique.

Reinhold, the adopted son of the Mennonite elder Waldemar, returning from a year's travel, hopes to become formally engaged to his foster sister, Maria,—since they had before his leaving pledged each other their love. Mathias, an older man of prominence in the Mennonite community, asks Waldemar for Maria's hand in marriage on the very morning Reinhold is expected back, though he knows very well that Reinhold expects to marry her. She submits to her father's wish, not realizing until after she sees Reinhold what she has done.

About this time two French officers from Napoleonic headquarters at Danzig come to demand grain for their army and at the same time to warn against supporting Schill's uprising: anyone on whose person a copy of Schill's proclamation is found will be shot. When one of the officers molests Maria, Reinhold defends her. The officer then insults Reinhold and adds, "Das feige Zeug kann sick nit schlagen!" Reinhold accepts the challenge to a duel to take place the following morning, and receives a pistol from the officer.

If the duel takes place Reinhold will gain favor in Maria's eyes,

[1] Ernst von Wildenbruch, *Gesammelte Werke,* ed. by Berthold Litzmann, Berlin, 1912, Vol. VII. *Der Menonit* is found on pp. 135-233.

no matter whether he is killed or, should he be victorious, only excommunicated by the church for duelling. Mathias must therefore prevent the duel. To accomplish this he accuses Reinhold of having been the challenger, and has him haled before the church elders at the hour set for the duel. In a heated discussion Reinhold strongly protests that the honor of the church is at stake and agrees not to fight the duel only after he is promised Maria's hand by Waldemar. A messenger brings a note from the French officer declaring Reinhold a coward, and Reinhold collapses with the words, "Weh! meine Ehre!"

During the following night, while Reinhold is wandering restlessly up and down in the garden, an emissary of Schill hands him Schill's proclamation, whereupon he agrees to meet the emissary on the next night. Maria comes out a moment later, takes the proclamation from Reinhold, and urges him to take her away with him when he goes to join Schill. Mathias, who has been eavesdropping, betrays Reinhold as well as Schill's envoy to the church leaders. The latter are maliciously pleased by the thought that Reinhold is to be shot at Danzig for receiving Schill's proclamation. When Reinhold pleads with the elders for the emissary's life, they make it clear that it makes no difference to them who is their king, Frederick William or Napoleon. They have no patriotism, no feeling of loyalty to their country. When Reinhold in desperation curses them, they bind him and lock him in a room, to be delivered to the French.

On the next evening, while Waldemar, now suddenly become a broken old man, sits reading his Bible, Maria gives him a glass of wine (probably drugged), takes the key to the room where Reinhold lies imprisoned, frees him, and gives him the pistol which he received from the French officer. He finds the elders of the church already assembled in the garden ready to seize Schill's emissary. Reinhold shoots Mathias, helps the envoy to escape, and is himself seized by the elders. He admits to the French officers who suddenly appear that he has the proclamation, but fails to find it. With his last strength Mathias points to Maria, thereby incriminating her. She dies of shock in Waldemar's arms. Waldemar finally sees the rascality of Mathias, and is reconciled with Reinhold. The latter, as a last request, asks the Frenchman who has called him a coward when he failed to report for the duel, to bear witness at his execution at Danzig that he is to die not as a coward, but as a patriot.

Der Menonit was written in Berlin in 1877, and was presented at several private performances in the following year. In 1881 it was presented to the public and in 1882 it reached the Mannheim stage.

The reaction among the German Mennonites was prompt. In November, 1882, the editor of the *Mennonitische Blätter,* H. van der Smissen, who witnessed the performance in Mannheim, wrote:

> Sonst grade kein besonderer Verehrer des Theaters, fühlte ich mich diesmal doch veranlasst, zu sehen, was der Verfasser des Stückes aus dem schwierigen Stoff gemacht habe. Denn unsere stillen Mennonitenväter und ein Trauerspiel fürs Theater passen zusammen wie die Faust aufs Auge. . . . Die ganze Erscheinung der Mennoniten entspricht der schiefen Darstellung des Dichters: Möglichst dumm aussehende Gesichter, runde Hüte, wie man sie an katholischen Priestern zu sehen gewohnt ist, hohe Wasserstiefel oder auch gelblederne Gamaschen.—Alles schnurstracks dem Bilde zuwiderlaufend, welches Mancher unter uns noch aus eigener Anschauung von unseren Alten haben wird. Nur die langschössigen Röcke haben einigen Anspruch auf Echtheit.[2]

Van der Smissen admits that the play has some scenes that are good, especially the inner conflict in Waldemar when he has to guard Reinhold and treat him like a criminal. However,—

> . . .Wer mit unserer Vergangenheit bekannt ist, dem ist der grelle Abstand zwischen Wahrheit und Dichtung sofort ersichtlich; wer sie nicht kennt, dem ist es ja auch einerlei, wem die Rolle des bösen Elements in dem Stück zugefallen ist. . . . Einer muss ja halt die Zeche bezahlen, und in diesem Stück sind nun einmal die Zerrbilder der Mennoniten dazu verurtheilt.[3]

The next two articles on the subject were written in 1883 and 1884 by the pastor of the Mennonite Church at Danzig, H. G. Mannhardt, and deal with the question of the reliability of the source material for *Der Menonit.*[4]

The first of these two articles discusses the play from the point of view of accuracy of the portrayal of Mennonite principles and character, and also of historical accuracy. In respect to the first point, Mannhardt agrees with van der Smissen. On the second point he states:

> Zum Schluss sei hier kurz erwähnt, dass im Jahre 1815 in mehreren unserer Gemeinden wirklich junge Leute, die den Krieg freiwillig mitgemacht hatten, nach ihrer Rückkehr verlangten, als Mitglieder anerkannt zu wer-

[2] H. van der Smissen, "Die Mennoniten auf der Bühne," in *Mennonitische Blätter,* Kaiserslautern, Vol. XXIX (November, 1882), p. 86f.

[3] *Ibid.,* p. 87.

[4] "Die Mennoniten in der dramatischen Literatur," by H. G. Mannhardt, in *Jahrbuch der Mennoniten-Gemeinden in West-und Ostpreussen,* Danzig, 1883, pp. 23-73. The discussion on *Der Menonit* begins on page 31. Also "Der Bischof Eylert und die Mennoniten," *Menn. Bl.,* Vol. XXXI (March, 1884), pp. 17-20.

den, was ihnen jedoch mit dem Bemerken verweigert wurde, sie hätten sich durch die Preisgebung eines wesentlichen Religionsgrundsatzes der Mennoniten freiwillig von der Gemeinde getrennt und müssten daher die Folgen auf sich nehmen.

In der Elbing-Ellerwalder Gemeinde rief ein junger Mann die Hülfe des Ministeriums an. . . . Das Urteil wurde schliesslich vom Kammergericht in Berlin dahin gefällt, dass sämmtliche Angeklagten freizusprechen und die Kosten der Untersuchung niederzuschlagen seien.

. . . Die heutigen Mennoniten haben anerkannt, dass sie dem Staate zur Verteidigung des Vaterlandes ihre Kräfte zu leihen schuldig sind. . . .[5]

When the newspapers carried the information that Wildenbruch found the material for the tragedy in Bishop Eylert's work on Frederick William III,[6] Mannhardt examined the material in its context and gave the following report.

Bishop Eylert records evidences of the affection of the people toward their ruler and tells this story: When almost all of Prussia was occupied by the French, and the royal family lived in Memel, they were frequently in actual want. Abraham Nickel, a Mennonite from Culm, brought a gift of 3,000 Friedrichsd'or (45,000 marks) and a basket of butter, and addressed the king thus:

Gnädigster Herr, Deine getreuen Unterthanen, die Gemeinden der Mennoniten, haben erfahren, wie gross Deine Noth ist, die Gott über Dich, Dein Haus und Land verhängt hat. Das thut uns allen leid und darum sind wir zusammengetreten und haben gern und willig diese Kleinigkeit zusammengebracht. Wir bitten Dich, diese Gabe aus treuen Herzen wohlwollend anzunehmen, und wir werden nicht aufhören für Dich zu beten.[7]

Bishop Eylert says further: "Die gute Gesinnung, welche die Mennoniten-Gemeinden in Preussen ihm zur Zeit des Unglücks bethätiget, hat auf den König einen günstigen tiefen Eindruck ge-

[5] Mannhardt, *Jahrbuch der Mennoniten-Gemeinden,* p. 53. The Mennonites of Germany were no longer nonresistant in 1882, but served in the army. Some took up noncombatant service but more took combatant.

[6] *Charakter-Züge und historische Fragmente aus dem Leben des Königs von Preussen Friedrich Wilhelm III. Gesammelt nach eigenen Beobachtungen und herausgegeben von R. Fr. Eylert, evangel. Bischof und Königl. Hofprediger usw.* Magdeburg, 1844, pp. 226 ff. (I was unable to find the book. The reference is quoted from Mannhardt.)

[7] Quoted by Mannhardt *op. cit.,* p. 50. For future gifts, both voluntary and imposed, see the interesting account by W. Mannhardt, Privatdocent an der Universität Berlin, *Die Wehrfreiheit der altpreussischen Mennoniten,* Berlin, 1863, and Max Schön, *Das Mennonitenthum in Westpreussen,* Berlin, 1886, p. 58f. The latter, a historical booklet of 88 pages, has the subtitle, *Ein kirchen- und kulturgeschichtlicher Beitrag zur Belehrung über das Wesen des Mennonitenthums,* and was written by a non-Mennonite for the express purpose of correcting the impression made by *Der Menonit.* The *Christlicher Gemeinde-Kalendar,* Vol. XII, 1936, pp. 90 ff, contains an eye-witness account of relations between the Mennonites and the state at the time of the Wars of Liberation (ca. 1813) from the diary of a Mennonite bishop, Jacob Donner, of near Danzig.

macht, so dass, so oft von dieser seltsamen Secte die Rede war, er immer ihrer mit besonderem Wohlwollen gedachte."[8] Then he mentions the doctrines peculiar to them, ending with their attitude toward war and church discipline. "Sie besitzen und üben in ihrer Gemeinde die strengste Kirchenzucht und excommuniciren schonungslos jedes Mitglied, welches ihre Gesetze übertritt."[9] Upon this follows the story which Wildenbruch used. It is here given as quoted by Mannhardt.

Da geschah es nun in dem grossen Jahre 1813-14, dass ergriffen von der damaligen Zeit und begeistert von dem Zurufe des Königs: "An mein Volk," ein edler, kräftiger, hochsinniger Jüngling aus der Mennoniten-Gemeinde in der Nähe von Danzig. dem Zuge seines Herzens folgend, sich still entfernte, und ganz gegen den Willen seiner Eltern, und gegen die kirchlichen Gesetze der Gemeinde, welcher er als geweihetes Mitglied angehörte, sich freiwillig in die Reihen der Kämpfenden stellte. Wie alle, so beseelte auch ihn der Geist des Muthes und der Treue: durch Besonnenheit und Tapferkeit zeichnete er sich aus, und zum Offizier befördert, kehrte er nach beendigtem Kriege, geschmückt mit dem eisernen Kreuze, frisch und gesund an Leib und Seele zurück. Was er aber bange geahnt, geschah; wenn gleich mit Thränen, verweigerten doch entschlossen die Eltern ihm Aufnahme, und Geschwister, Anverwandte, Freunde und Gemeindeglieder flohen ihn wie einen Geächteten. Das kirchliche Anathema war über ihn ausgesprochen und der Bannfluch lag mit allen schrecklichen Folgen schwer auf seiner Brust.

"Erbarme Dich meiner!" schrieb er an den König. "Ich habe gethan, was ich nicht lassen konnte und Dein Wort: Mit Gott für König und Vaterland! hat mich in die Schlachten und Siege geführt. Ich wollte, ich wäre gefallen; freudig hätte ich mein Blut für Dich vergossen. Aber ich bin in allen Gefahren erhalten und nun weiss ich nicht, wo ich, unstät und flüchtig, hin soll. Mennonit will und muss ich bleiben; bei meiner Taufe und Ablegung meines Glaubensbekenntnisses habe ich in demselben unwandelbare Treue Gott angelobt, und diese kann und werde ich nicht brechen. (Thatsächlich war die Uebernahme der Kriegspflicht bereits ein Bruch dieses Gelübdes gewesen. *Der Verfasser*) Auch möchte ich meine Religion und Kirche gegen keine vertauschen; sie ist die Religion eines patriarchalischen länd-

[8] H. G. Mannhardt, "Der Bischof Eylert und die Mennoniten," *Menn. Bl.*, Vol. XXXI (March, 1884), p. 18. Similar incidents are told in v. Reiswitz und Wadzeck, *Beiträge zur Kenntniss der Mennoniten-Gemeinden in Europa und America*, Berlin, 1821, pp. 233-315; the authors give in detail the correspondence between the government and the Mennonites on military service, as well as the measures passed both in favor of and against Mennonites. These are eyewitness accounts, and like the entire book, are objectively related from a non-Mennonite viewpoint. "Mehrere tausend Menschen, deren Haupt-Tendenz es ist, mit ihren anders denkenden Glaubensbrüdern im Frieden zu leben, und unter sich Reinheit des Glaubens und der Sitten zu erhalten, die sich überall durch Fleiss, Nüchternheit, Sparsamkeit und Ordnung auszeichnen" should be judged "mit ruhiger Besonnenheit" rather than "Vorurtheil und Heftigkeit" (Page 5 of the Introduction of their book). They present the "Actensammlung," in order to enable the reader to judge for himself concerning the patriotism of the Mennonites.

[9] Mannhardt, "Der Bischof Eylert und die Mennoniten," *Menn. Bl., op cit.*, p. 19.

lichen Stilllebens; sie gefällt mir vor allen und ich kenne keine bessere. Aber man hat mich ausgestossen, weil ich gegen ihre Gesetze kriegerische Waffen getragen und mitgefochten habe. Thränen, Bitten, Flehen um Wiederaufnahme haben nichts vermocht. Man fliehet mich als einen Mörder; mein eisernes Kreuz ist der Gemeinde wie ein Kainszeichen; in den Bann gethan, liegt auf mir sein Fluch. Was fang ich an? Gerechter, gnädiger König, hilf mir und rette mich!"

Auf den König machte dies aus zerrissener Seele geflossene Schreiben des jungen Mannes einen tiefen Eindruck. Er fühlte die sich herausstellende schwierige Collision der Eigenthümlichkeit dieser Sekte, welche den Krieg als Sünde verwirft, mit dem inzwischen erlassenen Gesetze, welches allen Unterthanen ohne Ausnahme den Militärdienst zur Pflicht macht. Nachdem er sich selbst voll warmer Theilnahme, jedoch vergeblich, bemüht hatte, den jungen Mann mit seinen Eltern und der Gemeinde zu versöhnen und seine Wiederaufnahme in dieselbe zu bewirken, die als unstatthaft dennoch zurückgewiesen war, befahl er dem Staatsrathe, gutachtlich darüber zu berichten: "Ob bei der allgemeinen Militärpflicht eine Ausnahme von derselben den Mennoniten gestattet werden könne?"[10]

According to Bishop Eylert the matter was debated by the King's Council. In favor of the Mennonites it was argued that though they could not bear arms, they had always paid additional taxes. "Bei der Innigkeit und Begeisterung, womit sie den Grundsätzen ihrer Sekte fast fanatisch anhingen, würden sie eher das Vaterland verlassen, als ihnen untreu werden"; and Prussia would lose a large number of useful citizens. Finally, intolerance would besmirch the honor of Prussia. The military were of contrary opinion: There could be no exceptions to military service; it was time to remove ancient errors and prejudices. "Waffenscheue und Feigheit verdiene Verachtung, und wer nicht fürs Vaterland sterben könne, vermöge auch nicht für dasselbe würdig zu leben;" and "Niemand hat grössere Liebe denn die, dass er sein Leben lässt für seine Freunde."[11] The vote was in favor of exemption for the Mennonites.

Mannhardt then examines the reliability of Eylert's anecdote. Pointing out that it was written from memory in 1844 when Eylert was old, he contrasts it with what he assumes to have been the actual case[12] behind Eylert's story as found in the Danzig Mennonite church records, "welche gut geführt sind."

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 19.

[11] John 15:13.

[12] There is no absolute guarantee that the case of Heinrich Jantzen furnished the basis for Eylert's anecdote, inasmuch as Eylert mentions no names, and several other stories like this one are told in W. Mannhardt's *Die Wehrfreiheit der altpreussischen Mennoniten.* It is very probable, in fact, that Eylert's anecdote is a composite of several historical cases.

On July 21, 1816, the church discussed the request of Johann Jantzen, that his son Heinrich be reinstated as a member after he had served as a volunteer against France. It was unanimously agreed that those who had joined the service had thereby voluntarily withdrawn from the church, and could not be readmitted; the case was accordingly closed.

As further evidence in this case Mannhardt says:

Durch eine alte Dame unserer Gemeinde, in deren Gedächtniss die Ereignisse jener bewegten Zeit noch sehr frisch sind, habe ich nun nährere Auskunft in bündigster Form erhalten. Der Grossvater dieser Dame war damals Aeltester unserer Gemeinde, ihr Vater war Prediger. Im Hause ihres Vaters und Grossvaters erhielt sie daher von allen Vorfällen, welche die Gemeinde betrafen, genaue Kunde und bewahrt davon noch heute die lebhaftesten Eindrücke. Diese erzählte mir: "Als der Aufruf des Königs 1813 erging, ist Herr Johann Jantzen aus St. Albrecht bei Danzig selbst mit seinem Sohne hingegangen und hat ihn den Fahnen der Freiwilligen zugeführt. Dieser Sohn Heinrich hat den Krieg glücklich mitgemacht, aber weder das eiserne Kreuz noch irgend eine Beförderung erhalten. Nach seiner Rückkehr hat sein Vater das Gesuch um seine Wiederaufnahme eingereicht, welches abschlägig beschieden wurde."[13]

Without impugning the honesty of the aged Bishop Eylert, Mannhardt states that the appeal to the King as well as the King's response existed only in Eylert's imagination,[14] and that the family did not cast the young soldier out.

Mannhardt concludes that the historical basis for Wildenbruch's *Menonit* is very slight, especially if the incident is considered in the setting into which Bishop Eylert put it.

In 1888, when *Der Menonit* was again to be presented on the stage in Berlin, the consistory of the Mennonite Church at Danzig wrote a letter directly to Wildenbruch protesting vigorously against the misrepresentation and warned that they were planning to publish a protest in the newspapers.[15] Wildenbruch replied to them under the date of May 21, 1888:

An den Vorstand der Danziger Mennoniten-Gemeinde
Hochgeehrte Herren!

Aus der sofortigen Beantwortung Ihres eben erst in meine Hände gelangten Schreibens vom gestrigen Tage mögen Sie den Eindruck entnehmen, den dasselbe auf mich geübt hat.

[13] Mannhardt, *loc. cit.*

[14] Nor is there any record of appeals to the King in the other cases reported by v. Reiswitz und Wadzeck (see footnote 8 above) and by H. G. Mannhardt.

[15] "Noch einmal der 'Menonit.' Correspondenz zwischen dem Vorstand der Gemeinde zu Danzig und Ernst von Wildenbruch," *Menn. Bl.*, Vol. XXXV (June 1, 1888), p. 61f.

Wie könnte es auch anders sein?—Eine Reihe von Männern, denen ich, wenn schon unbekannter Weise, die höchste persönliche Achtung entgegenbringe, erklärt mir in ernsten würdigen Worten, die eine offenkundige Sympathie wit meinem sonstigen Dichten und Schaffen bezeugen, dass sie durch eins meiner Werke in der Tiefe ihres Gefühles gekränkt worden sind.

Das ist für einen Dichter, dessen einziges Verdienst vielleicht darin besteht, dass er nie ein Werk geschrieben hat, das nicht die volle Wahrheit seiner Seele wiedergab, ein ernster Vorgang, und für einen Dichter, der seine Aufgabe darin allein erblickt, dem Gemüthe seines Volkes im besten Sinne des Wortes wohlzuthun, ein schmerzliches Ereignis. Trotzdem kommt es mir erwünscht, da es mir Gelegenheit bietet, den Anlass zu berichten, aus dem mir das Drama "der Menonit" entstanden ist, und aus dem Anlass, so gut es mir gelingt, mein Werk zu erklären.

Pointing out that he obtained the suggestion for his drama from Eylert, he continues:

Diesen Vorgang, dessen Thatsächlichkeit mir durch die Persönlichkeit des Berichterstatters beglaubigt erschien und dessen Richtigkeit durch die Ausführungen auf Seite 50-53 Ihres Jahrbuchs (1883) bestätigt wird,[16] habe ich gelesen, und dieser Vorgang—die Freimüthigkeit Ihrer Aeusserungen über mein Stück berechtigt mich zu gleichem Freimuth—hat mich in tiefster Seele empört!

Ich bin ein Deutscher, ein Preusse, und uns Preussen erscheint die Zeit der Freiheitskriege wie eine heilige Episode in unserer Geschichte. Wer waren und sind die Leute, fragte ich mich, die inmitten eines grossen Volkes lebend, es wagen durften, einen Jüngling aus ihrer Mitte zu verstossen, weil derselbe gethan hatte, was jenes ganze grosse Volk gethan, weil er sich erhoben hatte, um den Boden, der ihn und sie tränkte und nährte, von der Faust des Unterdrückers zu befreien?

"Er verstiess gegen die mit Bewusstsein von ihm übernommenen Religionsgrundsätze" wird mir erwidert.

Was denn aber wäre aus unserem Vaterlande geworden, fragte ich mich, wenn diese Auffassung vom Willen Gottes die allgemeine gewesen wäre? Wir wären verkommen und verdorben unter dem fremden Eroberer und hätten alles eingebüsst, was den Menschen zum Menschen macht und ihn dadurch befähigt, seine Seele zu Gott zu erheben.

Auf Seite 53 Ihres Jahrbuchs führen Sie aus, dass die heutigen Mennoniten anerkannt haben, dass sie dem Staate zur Vertheidigung des Vaterlandes ihre Kräfte zu leihen schuldig sind. . . .[17] Unter "Kräfte" begreife ich nicht Geld und Gut, sondern Leib und Leben. . . .

Jedes Drama ist eine symbolische Dichtung—so auch der 'Menonit.' *Genannt* sind in meinem Stück die Menoniten—denn das Drama fordert Individualisirung der einander gegenüberstehenden Gewalten. *Gemeint* aber sind nicht nur die Menoniten, sondern all' die Mächte, welche ein höheres Gesetz für den Menschen aufstellen wollen, als das in dem Worte "Vaterland" enthaltene.

Mein ganzes dramatisches Schaffen hat einen einzigen bewussten Zweck: Meinem Volke zu dienen—im Dienst am Vaterland. Meine Worte sollen

[16] Wildenbruch is in error. Only parts of the story are corroborated by Mannhardt.

[17] Wildenbruch's interpretation of Mannhardt is correct. See footnote 5.

dazu helfen, die Seele meines Volkes wehrhaft zu machen wider den Feind und warm zu erhalten gegen Lauheit. Darum lehne ich mich auf. . . gegen jedermann, der auf die Seele meines Volkes im entgegengesetzten Sinne einwirken will, sei es aus falsch verstandenem Gottesbewusstsein, sei es aus falschem Humanitätsgefühl!

. . . Liebe zum Vaterland ist Gottesdienst. . . .

. . . Man hat das Stück lieben gelernt, und die deutsche Seele ist viel zu milde von Natur, als dass sie ein Stück lieben könnte, dessen Seele etwas anderes enthält als Versöhnung.

. . . Eines Unrechts bin ich mir nicht bewusst,—aber ein erfreuendes Bewusstsein würde es mir sein, wenn ich mir denken könnte, dass meine Worte dazu gedient haben, . . . den Stachel des Gedankens aus der Seele zu nehmen, als hätte ich Sie persönlich in Ihren Uberlieferungen kränken wollen.[18]

The editor of the *Mennonitische Blätter* replied to this letter with these arguments: Enthusiasm may not have been very high among the Mennonites during the Wars of Liberation—even Goethe did not have much to say about the Fatherland—but their loyalty never wavered. Many Mennonites served as doctors and nurses among the victims of the plague, and died there; "Wir Mennoniten fürchten den Tod fürs Vaterland nicht; wir scheuen nur das Tödten."[19]

In the meantime on May 26, 1888, the church at Emden appealed to the "General-Intendanten der Königlichen Schauspiele" to prohibit the presentation of *Der Menonit* in the Royal Theater, since it misrepresented the Mennonites to many who would form their entire impression of them from this play, and since Wildenbruch's drama, *Das neue Gebot,* had been prohibited on similar grounds.[20] The request was denied. Newpapers commented that granting the request would set a precedent according to which the Dominicans could demand the suppression of *Don Carlos,* the nobility that of *Kabale und Liebe,* diplomats of *Hamlet,* the Jews of the *Merchant of Venice,* etc.[21] The next step was the publication of a protest against the misrepresentation in the German newspapers. The papers published the protest and added their own comments to the article, most of them favorable.[22]

[18] *Menn. Bl.,* Vol. XXXV, p. 61 f. Wildenbruch's argument that the Mennonites should not take offence because he "meant not only the Mennonites but rather all those forces that attempt to set up a higher law than that contained in the word fatherland," is patently weak. No one would suspect from the drama itself that this is the case. The reader would naturally infer that the Mennonites, all the Mennonites, and only the Mennonites are meant; only Mennonite characters are used to carry the point of the drama. Nor does the statement that the drama contains only "Versöhnung" merit acceptance, for the theme is the very opposite.

[19] *Ibid.,* p. 74f.

[20] *Ibid.,* pp. 97 ff.

[21] *Ibid.,* p. 70.

[22] *Ibid.,* p. 110 f.

Apparently in order to meet the criticisms that had been published by the Mennonites as well as those written by dramatic critics, Wildenbruch revised the drama and changed it from a tragedy to a "Schauspiel." When it was produced in its new form, the following review appeared in a Hamburg paper.[23]

Als das Stück hier zum ersten Mal in Scene ging, sprachen wir die Ansicht aus, dass der tragische Ausgang der Handlung keine Nothwendigkeit sei und der Hauptfehler des Stückes in der gewaltsamen Herbeiführung dieses tragischen Schlusses liege. Auch die gestrige Aufführung bestärkte uns in dieser Auffassung, und von Neuem zeigte es sich, dass der Autor den Conflict auf Kosten der Wahrscheinlichkeit der Handlung construirt hat, indem er die Mennoniten als vaterlandslose Menschen hinstellte, welchen die Begriffe von Mannesehre und Vaterlandsliebe fremd sind. Wildenbruch hat diese Schwäche seines Werkes selber erkannt und den vierten Act vollständig umgearbeitet. In dieser Gestalt fehlt dem Schauspiel der tragische Schluss, der Bote Schills tödtet in Nothwehr den Zeloten Mathias, Reinhold, der Held des Stückes, ergreift die Flucht, die Mennoniten nehmen den Franzosen gegenüber für ihren Glaubensbruder Partei, und Maria wird nicht zum Tode geführt, weil sie den Aufruf Schills bei sich trägt, sondern der Vertreter der französischen Armee, Hauptmann Despreaux, zerreisst das verhängnissvolle Blatt Papier mit den Worten: Soll Frankreich sich vor einem Kinde fürchten? Wohlan, mit Frauen führen wir nicht Krieg.

This experimental change, however, so weakened the play, that the author returned to the original form and only this original form appears in Wildenbruch's collected works.[24]

There is doubtless material for a tragedy in a conflict between conscience and patriotism in a period of danger to the native country, but the dramatic force of *Der Menonit* is weakened somewhat by allowing selfishness, cowardice, and villainy to hide behind the conscience—in this case really only a petrified religious tradition, and by substituting the personal honor of the hero for love of country. A further weakening is brought about by the introduction of the love motive. This is particularly evident in the climax,—the scene in which Reinhold tries to convince the church leaders that his honor as well as that of the church is at stake in the duel, and then lets himself be persuaded to drop the affair in return for the promise of Maria's hand. It is perhaps because of these weaknesses that Wildenbruch found it necessary to make the villainy and selfishness of the church leaders so glaring.

Besides Reinhold, the only probable character of importance is

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 119. The quotation is taken from the *Hamburger Correspondenz.* The play appeared in Hamburg on October 1, 1888.

[24] *Gesammelte Werke,* ed. by Berthold Litzmann, Vol, VII, p. 534.

Waldemar, the bishop of the Danzig congregation. His pacifist position is sincere and convincing:

> Geliebter Sohn, entsage diesem Zweikampf!
> Ich weiss Du hättest tausendfach den Mut
> Mit ihm zu kämpfen, drum kannst Du entsagen.
> Dies heilige Gesetz der Menoniten,
> Das Kampf verbietet, glaube, es ist gut;
> Kein Schwächling wars, kein Feigling, der es schrieb.
> Blut trägt ein schreckliches Gesetz in sich:
> Vergoss'nes Blut schreit immerdar nach neuem,
> Und es ersäuft die heil'ge Gotteswelt.
> O eine Menschenbrust voll Kraft und Mut
> Birgt so viel Segen der gequälten Menschheit,
> Wenn sie mit sanfter Liebe sich vermählt.[25]

But even Waldemar is not always convincing as a character. A man of his intelligence should have been better able to read character than he was. No father whose love is as tender toward his child as Waldemar's to Maria would insist on a loveless marriage for her. "Weil's meines Vaters heil'ger Wille ist, will ich die Eure sein," says Maria to Mathias. Waldemar's position in the church is also dubious. While on the one hand he asserts his authority by saying that Reinhold will not fight because he, the elder, forbids it ("Hast Du vergessen, dass ich der Aelt'ste bin, dem Ihr gehorcht?"),[26] on the other he weakly allows himself to be used by Mathias and the others for their ends. But such a scene is unhistoric, for Mennonite church government has always been democratic.[27] The congregation elects as its elder one of their own number, and though he has their respect as their spiritual leader, he is not dictatorial with them.

The other characters are selfish and greedy, and hide their cowardice behind the Bible and pseudo-religious convictions. Mathias is a scoundrel from any point of view. And Justus, the spokesman for the church, thinks only of his property; for it he is willing to forego his nonresistance in order to destroy anyone who threatens his possessions.

> Was Vaterland! Der Acker, der mich nährt,
> Die Scheuer, die mein Gut bewahrt, das Haus,
> Das mich bedeckt, das ist mein Vaterland.
> . . .

[25] *Der Menonit,* p. 184.

[26] *Der Menonit,* p. 165.

[27] Mennonite baptismal vows still include the promise to "take counsel from the church and to give counsel to the church."

Und wer mir mein Getreide holt vom Acker,
Der geht ans Leben mir und ist mein Feind,
. . .
Drum denk' ich meiner Haut mich zu erwehren.[28]

These church leaders are represented by the author as entirely lacking a sense of honor. Their hard self-righteousness makes them insensible to insult. If Wildenbruch had had these leaders feel the deep insult in the officer's words, and still have them refuse to avenge themselves because of a higher law, he would not only have presented true Mennonite doctrine, but also greatly heightened the dramatic conflict. A scene such as the binding of Reinhold by the Mennonite elders and delivering him together with Schill's envoy to the French to certain death, is historically out of the question.

Soergel says of *Der Menonit*:

Wie wird. . . im "Menoniten" aus dem Drama der beginnenden nationalen Erhebung ein plumpes Intrigenstück, in dem nur eine Szene etwas vom heissen Atem der Tage der Schillschen Erhebung hat! . . . Wie ist, was geschieht, nicht begründet, wie häufen sich bei Wildenbruch Unwahrscheinlichkeiten und Unmöglichkeiten! Die handelnden oder besser die eifernden Personen sind keine wirklichen Menschen, nur laute Schallrohre für Ideen, oder bewegte Riesenmasken. . . . Er kennt nicht die Sprache der Pausen: als . . . die Tochter dem Vater ohnmächtig in die Arme sinkt, da hat der Vater nichts Eiligeres zu tun, als die banale Theaterreflexion anzubringen: "So ist Natur barmherziger als Menschen."[29]

It is unfortunate that Wildenbruch used Mennonite material as a vehicle for his militant patriotism. Between him and the Mennonites the gulf was too wide to be bridged. The nonresistant position of the Mennonites was in itself so repugnant to his Prussianism, that any other faults he might add to their character in a drama would seem trifling to him; hence he felt no compunction about the misrepresentation in *Der Menonit*. The premises upon which he built the drama are unhistorical and untrue. He missed the dramatic possibilities inherent in the material he used by placing all the virtues on the side of the hero and all the vices on the "villain's." He failed to create a great tragedy since he did not present the true conflict between two irreconcilable duties.

It is of interest to note that *Der Menonit* was revived in 1914 on

[28] *Der Menonit*, p. 214.

[29] Albert Soergel, *Dichtung und Dichter der Zeit: Eine Schilderung der deutschen Literatur der letzten Jahrzehnte*, Leipzig, 1911, p. 76f.

the German stage as an aid to the stimulation of the war spirit in the World War I.

American Mennonite Criticism of DER MENONITE

The German-language periodicals of the American Mennonites also gave the *Menonit* their attention. The *Herold der Wahrheit* of Elkhart, Indiana, in the issue of August 1, 1888 (vol. XXV, p. 229f.), published a review from the pen of the late John Horsch which presents approximately the same point of view as that of the German Mennonite periodicals, and points out that there is a vast difference between the Prussian concept of "honor" and that of the Mennonites. The *Mennonitische Rundschau* of Elkhart, Indiana, of the same date (August 1, 1888, vol. IX, No. 31) published an unsigned article (presumably by John Horsch) summarizing very briefly the Eylert incident on which the drama is based as well as the contents of Wildenbruch's reply to the consistory of the Danzig church. Again in 1891, after *Der Menonit* had played on the New York stage, the *Herold der Wahrheit* (vol. XXVIII, Dec. 15, 1891) carried an article by John Horsch again, quoting from a Dr. Seibert in the *Deutscher Volksfreund* (No. 46) a defense of the Mennonites, and concluding that Wildenbruch did not receive the material for the drama "aus der Hand der Wahrheit." On November 4, 1891 the *Rundschau* (vol. XII, No. 44) published the following review by a dramatic critic with introductory comments by the editor. The *Mennonitische Blätter* for November, 1891 (vol. XXXVIII, p. 142), reprinted this material *in extenso* under the title "Amerikanische Urteile über Wildenbruch's *Menonit.*"

Wie schon einige Male in der "Rundschau" erwähnt, hat der Dichter Ernst von Wildenbruch ein Theaterstück verfasst, welches den Titel "Der Mennonit" führt. Der Verfasser, dessen aufdringlich-patriotische Werke sich in gewissen Kreisen Deutschlands einiger Berühmtheit erfreuen, hat mit dem Trauerspiele "Der Mennonit" den Versuch gemacht, die Wehrlosigkeit der Mennoniten als Vaterlandsverrat und unhaltbare Schrulle zu brandmarken. Unlängst wurde das Stück auch in New York von einer gastirenden deutschländischen Schauspielertruppe aufgeführt, wobei der Schauspieler Kainz den "Mennoniten" spielte. Ein New-York Theater-Kritiker, dem gewiss Niemand den Vorwurf machen kann, dass er mennonitischen Principien huldigt, beurtheilt das Machwerk Wildenbruchs wie folgt:

"Der *Menonit* ist meiner Ansicht nach ein schwaches Stück. Ich rechne es dem gesunden Sinn des hiesigen Publikum hoch an, dass es sich von seiner Rührseligkeit und seinen patriotischen Phrasen nicht verblenden liess. Dieses Drama ist eine trübselige Frucht missverstandener Vater-

landsliebe (seitens des Dichters). Wie stände es einem Amerikaner an, wenn er die Quäker als Verräther am Vaterlande, als eine Rotte nichtswürdiger Subjecte von der Bühne aus brandmarkte, weil sie im Bürgerkriege nicht wie die andern Mitbürger zu den Waffen eilten? Ihre Satzung verbietet es ihnen. Nun wäre es wohl eine dankenswerthe dichterische Aufgabe, zu zeigen, wie ein feuriger, für die Befreiung seines Vaterlandes begeisterter Jüngling an dieser Satzung zerschellt. Aber Wildenbruch. . . genügt nicht der strenge Glaube der Mennoniten, er stempelt sie zu einem habgierigen Schachervolke, zu feigen Verräthern.—Kainz verkörperte den Helden, den Pflegesohn des Mennoniten-Aeltesten, der unter Schills Freischaren für die Erlösung des Vaterlandes vom französischen Joch kämpfen will, mit hinreissender Begeisterung. Die prasselnden Feuerwerke an gesinnungstüchtigen Reden schleuderte er mit grösster Bravour ins Haus; aber das Stück vermag er, vermag Niemand zu einem Bühnenwerk empor zu heben, das durch innere Wahrscheinlichkeit geadelt wird. Das alles mag sich wirklich so zugetragen haben, und dennoch macht es die Wirkung des Gemachten, Theatralischen. Die einzige rührende Figur des Stückes ist Maria, die Tochter des Aeltesten, um derentwillen Reinhold zuerst gegen die Satzungen der Secte verstösst, indem er einen französischen Soldaten der sie beschimpfte, zum Zweikampf herausfordert!"

EXTINCT MENNONITE CHURCHES IN OHIO

I

The Church in Williams County

John Umble

Early in his research on Ohio Mennonite Sunday-school history, the writer found in the *Herald of Truth* a reference to Bishop Isaac Hoffer, evidently pastor of a Mennonite congregation in Williams County, Ohio. Inquiry and later research, however, failed for some time to reveal anything more about the church or even its location. When the Ohio Sunday School Conference was held near Stryker, Ohio, in 1936, the writer inquired of his host whether such a Mennonite congregation was still in existence. Then he learned to his surprise that the cemetery as well as the site of the former Mennonite Church were well known to a few of the members of the Central, Lockport, and Clinton Amish Mennonite congregations in Fulton and Williams counties. A fairly complete history of the now extinct congregation was gathered from the cemetery, the *Burkholder Family History,* and the *History of Williams County,* and also by consulting descendants of members of the congregation.

Williams County, is located in the great Black Swamp region in northwestern Ohio. In the early years the land was entirely covered with timber. Many of the settlers who bought farms in this county rode to the farm on horseback, located their land and then later helped to chop out roads in the uncleared areas. The timber would have been valuable if it had been near a canal or a railroad or even a large stream. As it was, the great trees became a liability rather than an asset. The farmers learned to fell the trees skillfully so that they could be burned with minimum labor. Literally thousands of dollars worth of valuable timber suitable for high grade native lumber was destroyed in this way in order to clear the land sufficiently to plant crops among the blackened stumps and tree trunks. The land was low, level, and swampy. Drainage was poor. In the spring the early settlers made their way through the woods, hopping from log to log. Later they walked or "cooned" the top of the rail fences.

The industry and energy of some of the early settlers forms an amazing page in American history. One of the early settlers, Peter Burkholder, who moved to Williams County from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, in 1843, arrived late in May. On the tract which he purchased a log house and a double log barn had already been erected. That summer he cleared five acres of land which he sowed to wheat in the fall.

The Mennonite settlers who formed the Mennonite congregation in Williams County came, originally, from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, but only a few came directly from that place. The others had resided for a longer or shorter period in Ontario, in Medina, Wayne, or Columbiana Counties, Ohio, in Elkhart County, Indiana, or even in Illinois.

One of the earliest settlers was Daniel Lehman, from Ontario, the son of John Lehman who was born in Switzerland in 1752, and Anna Hershi, his wife, born in the same year. Daniel Lehman (1791-1863) was born in Pennsylvania in 1791 and in 1814 married Esther Borkholder (1791-1863). She was the daughter of Jacob Borkholder, who was born in Lebanon County in 1768, lived in Franklin County, Pennsylvania, from 1800 until 1826, and then moved to York County, Canada. Daniel and Esther Lehman accompanied her parents to Ontario where they located on a farm in Pickering Township, York County. In 1842 Daniel and Esther Lehman moved to Williams County, Ohio, where they reared a family of seven children. Daniel's brother, Abraham, was the last bishop of the Williams County Mennonite congregation. Daniel Lehman died in 1863 and was buried in what is known as the Hoffer cemetery. His grave was marked with a rough stone marker. This stone eventually sank into the ground out of sight. One of the descendants of the old pioneers took a spade a few years ago, found the marker, and then placed another marker at the grave.

In 1843 Isaac Hoffer and his wife settled in Williams County. Hoffer had purchased a farm in Lancaster County for a high price and had lost it. After losing the property, he began to haul goods to Pittsburgh with a team and wagon and in this way made enough money to be able to move west. He moved from Lebanon County, Pennsylvania, to Wayne County, Ohio, in 1836. While he and his wife were living in Wayne County, their former friend Peter Borkholder and his wife, left Lancaster County, Pennsylvania,

(May 1, 1843),[1] and in Wayne County visited at the Issac Hoffer home. During their stay they persuaded Hoffer and his wife to accompany them to Williams County. Peter Borkholder made the entire trip with horses and wagons, spending three weeks in going from Lancaster County to Williams County and stopping at Mennonite settlements on the way. They took with them their household goods, farm implements, and a few sheep. When Isaac Hoffer arrived in Williams County, he bought from a man named Miller the farm where the Hoffer cemetery is now located. The taxes on his land were only sixty cents a year at first.

Joseph (1830-1917), the son of Peter Borkholder (1802-1850), married the daughter of Isaac Hoffer, and became one of the prominent figures in the congregation and also in the community in later years. Isaac Hoffer seems to have been a Mennonite minister at the time he and his wife moved to Williams County. He was ordained bishop some time prior to 1864, probably by Henry Stemen, of Fairfield, later of Allen, County, but it is possible that he was ordained bishop before 1843 when he moved to Williams County.

As already stated one of the earliest Mennonite settlers in the community was Daniel Lehman, who arrived in Williams County from Ontario in 1842. Peter Borkholder (1802-1850), his wife, Barbara Lehman (1804-1873), of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, and the Preacher Isaac Hoffer family, from Wayne County, Ohio, arrived the next year. Ezra Stoner, of Seneca County, had made a purchase on March 18, 1837, but it may be that he did not move to Williams County. He resold his land to John Stauffer, of Frederick County, Maryland. John Dill was a resident of Williams County in June, 1843. Jacob Delp, of Medina County, arrived early in the fall of 1843. Menno Naragang (pronounced Narrowgang and evidently a relative of the Ontario Nahrgangs) and Jacob Hoffer, son of Bishop Isaac Hoffer, purchased land in Williams County in 1849. Susan Landis, of Medina County, bought property in Williams County in 1851 from a man named Patterson living in Fairfield County, Ohio. In 1851 John Detweiler, of Mahoning County, bought forty acres in Williams County from Jefferson and Margaret Walters, also of Mahoning County, and paid $400 for the tract. Michael Gish was living in Williams County in 1856 and

[1] This Peter Borkholder was a brother of Joseph Borkholder (1803-1875), bishop of the Conestoga-Manor Mennonite Churches from 1864 to 1875.

purchased a certain tract of land from an executor living in Mahoning. Daniel Sutter, of Wayne County, purchased land in Brady township, Williams County, April 30, 1859. Samuel Sutter was living in Brady Township in 1860. Isaiah Shull sold forty acres to Abraham Metzler in 1868.[2] Land values increased rapidly. In 1855 B. F. Hamilton purchased one hundred sixty acres from Abraham Borkholder for $1,000.

The Eberlys had moved to Illinois but did not like the country. Mrs. Eberly was a Mennonite and when they learned that Isaac Hoffer, a former friend, was living in Williams County, the family moved back to Williams. They lived with the family of Isaac Hoffer until they brought a farm. The father of the family united with the church shortly before he died in 1844. The Eberlys were born in Elizabeth Township, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, in 1796.

Susan, second wife of Levi H. Eberly, was the daughter of Jacob and Barbara Christophel, and was born in Columbiana County, Ohio, August 6, 1840. When she was eight years old her parents moved to Elkhart County, Indiana,[3] where she united with the Mennonite Church in 1865. After her marriage to Levi H. Eberly in 1866, she came to Williams County where she lived for the remainder of her life. Funeral services were held at the Brethren Church about three miles southwest of Bryan, by Daniel Koch, a Dunkard minister descended from Mennonite parents, but she was buried in the Hoffer cemetery.

A certain Kilmer family moved from Crawford County, Ohio, to Williams sometime between 1845 and 1874. They moved from Williams County to the vicinity of Wakarusa, Elkhart County, Indiana, about 1874, and were members of the Old Order (Wisler) Mennonite Church at Yellow Creek.

Jacob Delp is remembered as a large, rawboned man of powerful build and great strength. On one occasion he wished to bring a pole from the woods. He took the axe and took with him his hired man.

[2] This Abraham Metzler and his wife and a Solomon Shull and his wife are buried in the German Reformed Cemetery one and one-fourth miles east of the Hoffer cemetery.

[3] The Jacob Christophel homestead was about six miles nearly south of Goshen, later owned by their son Daniel Christophel, now owned by their son Jesse Christophel. Mrs. Levi Eberly and Mrs. Elizabeth Lehman, the mother of Mrs. Daniel C. Lehman of West Unity, Ohio, were sisters. Mr. D. C. Lehman and his aged neighbor, David Eberly, gave the writer valuable assistance in gathering material and checking data for the history of the Williams County Mennonite Church.

After he cut down the pole he carried the large end of the pole and the axe and seemed to do it easily although the hired man could scarcely carry the small end. After the death of his wife in 1854, Jacob Delp returned to Medina County. A son and daughter, aged eighteen and twenty-two, respectively, were buried in the Hoffer cemetery in 1852 and 1853. The former Delp property lies just east of the German Reformed cemetery.

There seem to have been many irregularities in the church membership. In several families the father or mother were not members of the Mennonite Church. Many of the children never united with the church. Some attended the German Reformed Church a mile east of the Mennonite Church. It was a common practice in the early years for the young people not to unite with the church until after marriage. Some of the members of the Williams County congregation were past thirty when they united with the church. Jacob Delp united with the church shortly before he died. The same was true of John Dill who did not unite with the church until near his death which occurred at the age of eighty-seven in 1900. Even before he was a member of the church, however, he was very strict in the home and would not permit any card games in the house. His children, being very fond of card playing, played cards in the barn.

Abraham Dill, a son of John and Mary Dill was born February 21, 1856, one mile north and two miles west of West Unity, Ohio. He died February 5, 1926, at his home four miles west of West Unity. In 1886 he was united in marriage to Mary Ann Borkholder who was a niece of Joseph Borkholder and had been reared in their home. Abraham Dill's obituary, printed in the local paper at the time of his death, states: "In the year 1894 Mr. and Mrs. Dill experienced the New Birth of Jesus Christ in the little white United Brethren church near their country home, under the pastorate of Rev. Thomas; and during the past thirty-two years Mr. Dill's life has been a living sermon and testimony to the Christ life which was imparted to him at the time of his conversion."

A certain Catherine Bowman, born in Franklin County, Pa., Dec. 18, 1842, came to Ohio with Bishop Jacob and Mary Bowman, members of the Mennonite Church. She united with the Mennonite Church, and on Mar. 30, 1875, married James K. Dill. They united with the M.E. Church in 1878.

The families of the church as remembered by one of the older residents in the community were as follows with the number of children in each: Bishop and Mrs. Abraham Lehman, ten children; Preacher Levi Eberly, six children by his first marriage and nine by the second, also one daughter who died at eleven years, a total of sixteen children; Joseph Borkholder and his wife had no children of their own but reared four; Mr. and Mrs. Abraham Borkholder, wife a member of the Dunkard Church, had three of their own and raised one other; Preacher Martin Myers, seven; Samuel Lehman, three; Solomon Lehman, four; Moses Koch, six; Mr. and Mrs. Dill, five; Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Eberly, eight; William Rhodes, whose wife was an Eberly, two; and Samuel Naragang.

Other earlier families were G. and C. Webber who were living in the community between 1860 and 1863: B. S. and Priscilla Faust, who were living in the community in 1844 (possibly not Mennonites); J. and E. Rhoades, living in the community between 1847-60; E. and Catherine Markley, in 1849; P. and Sarah Miller in 1853; Michael and Mary Webber in 1853, and Daniel E. and Suzanne Morre.

Thus it is evident that although the congregation never was large it should have prospered, if all of the children had been gathered into the church. As it was, however, of the young people, that is of the young people who were growing up during the eighties and nineties, only four united with the church: Nancy Lehman, daughter of Bishop Lehman; Joe and Samuel Eberly, and Laura Myers, a daughter of Simon Myers, a member of the United Brethren Church, who did everything possible to discourage her and ridiculed her for wearing the bonnet and the prayer headcovering. One reason for the loss of interest seems to have been the strictness of the regulations and the unsympathetic attitude of the ministers toward young people and their activities. A number of the Koch families are now members of the Church of the Brethren. One of the young men is pastor of the "plain" Brethren Church in Williams County, about four miles west of West Unity, Ohio. This is the Daniel Koch who preached the funeral sermon for Susan Eberly.

Some of the members of the church moved to Elkhart County, Indiana. One of these was Benjamin Lehman (1820-1901). He was born in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, and moved with his parents to Berlin, now Kitchener, Ontario, when he was a child. He lived there fifteen years then moved to Williams County, Ohio, with

his parents. When he was twenty-two he was married to Susan Spitnole (originally Spitznaugel), who died in 1887. The next year after their marriage they united with the Mennonite Church, lived in Williams County for twelve years, then moved to Elkhart County where they were members of the Mennonite Church on North Main Street in Nappanee.

In the Williams County congregation the strict old order of the Mennonite Church was imposed with rigor and impartiality. Even the ministers came in for their share of criticism. Preacher Martin Myers once purchased a set of harness and was disciplined because the harness was "too fancy." The set had some silver mountings. Another one of the ministers, Levi Eberly, ornamented his dwelling house with wainscoting of alternate pieces of cherry and other ornamental woods. The church forced him to paint it white instead of varnishing it in natural color. Elizabeth Christophel, wife of Bishop Abraham Lehman, often remonstrated with her husband and begged him to be more lenient with the children and young people of the congregation.

When the Wisler difficulty arose in Elkhart County, Indiana, causing a division in the Mennonite Church, Abraham Lehman, bishop of the Williams County church, cast his lot with Bishop Jacob Wisler, of Elkhart County, and Bishop Abraham Rohrer, of Medina County. That meant, of course, that there could be no evening meetings, no Sunday school, no English preaching, in the Williams County Mennonite Church.

At an earlier period in the history of the church, as also in Wood County, English preaching had been considered favorably. In 1862 Erastus R. Robinson was ordained to the ministry so that the congregation might have English preaching.[4] But Erastus Robinson died of small pox before he ever preached and no other English preacher was ordained in the congregation. It was with a sense of bitter loss and poignant sadness that the congregation laid away their gifted and promising thirty-eight-year-old minister. An inscription which his wife had carved on his gravestone expressed, no doubt, the sentiment of the community:

"And must this body die,
This mortal frame decay,

[4] Not all of the members of the congregation were happy at the prospect of English preaching. Samuel Lehman never attended services in the Williams County Mennonite Church after the ordination of Erastus Robinson.

And must these active limbs of mine
Lay [sic] mouldering in the clay."

His wife, Lydia, widowed at the age of thirty-nine, remained a widow and was buried in the Hoffer Cemetery in 1887, twenty-five years after the death of her husband.

Before 1850 the preaching services were held in the log houses of the members. Frame buildings did not come into the Williams County settlement as soon as into some others because there was not enough water power to run a saw mill and because transportation difficulties prevented the importation of lumber. Isaac Hoffer seems to have built a log church on his property in 1847 or earlier. This, however, was not deeded to the church until a much later date. The old log church was replaced by a frame church in 1855, possibly later. It was not deeded, or rather leased, to the congregation until 1860. At that time the land on which the building stood was simply leased to the Mennonite Church. About 1894 the meeting house was reroofed.[5]

Isaac Hoffer seems to have been a rather active minister during the early years in Williams County. Like other Mennonite bishops he visited other churches. During the winter of 1864 he visited the churches in Allen County, Indiana, and Allen and Putnam Counties in Ohio. Late in the fall of 1865 he was visiting the Mennonite churches in Canada and preached the funeral sermon for a certain Preacher John Risser in Markham, York County.

Isaac Hoffer's last will and testament, dated 1860 and filed for probate in 1880, appointed John Dill his administrator. This will stipulated that Joseph Borkholder, his son-in-law, was to have the preference in buying the farm at private sale for a price agreed upon by him and the executor. (The court records show that he waived his right.) The beneficiaries mentioned in Hoffer's will are his sons, John Hoffer and Jacob Hoffer; Mary, the wife of John Dill; Anna Hoffer, evidently an unmarried daughter; and Catherine Borkholder, wife of Joseph Borkholder. Mary, wife of John Dill, was the daughter of the wife of Isaac Hoffer by an earlier marriage.

Martin Myers, whose wife was Mary Lehman, a daughter of the pioneer, Daniel Lehman, and a niece of Bishop Abraham Lehman, was another of the ministers. He preached so seldom that some of

[5] Daniel C. Lehman, who was sixty-six years old on February 27, 1943, remembers helping to reroof the building when he was seventeen years old.

the young people thought that he was the deacon. Actually, however, Abraham Lehman had been ordained deacon and Martin Myers minister, but since Martin Myers was not a very gifted speaker they changed about, Martin Myers performing the part of the church service usually given to the deacon and Abraham Lehman doing the preaching.[6] Martin Myers always read the benediction out of a book. He was born in 1819 and died in 1908.

Abraham Lehman, the last bishop of the congregation, was born in Franklin County, Pennsylvania, June 7, 1824. When he was five years old he accompanied his parents to Markham, Ontario. In 1842 the family moved to Williams County, Ohio. He and his father made a trip to Ontario to collect a payment on the Canadian farm. The payment was made entirely in silver which they carried home to Ohio in a sack. On March 28, 1858, Abraham Lehman married Elizabeth Christophel, born October 13, 1833. They united with the Mennonite Church in 1861 and Abraham was ordained minister, or possibly deacon, the next year (1862). He was ordained bishop in 1882, probably by Bishops Jacob Wisler and Abraham Rohrer.

The story of Elizabeth Christophel seems worthy of inclusion at this point as an important incident in the epic of the frontier. At the age of one and one-half years she moved with her parents to Columbiana County, Ohio. They lived there until 1848 when they with their six children, four sons and two daughters, moved to Elkhart County, Indiana. Since their descendants have kept a rather detailed written account of this journey and since it is probably typical of many such journeys at that time, it seems fitting to include a summary of this account.

The family moved in a wagon drawn by three horses, one of which was blind. The wagon was so heavily loaded that there was room for only two persons to ride; hence the group took turns walking. The youngest boy, Joseph, who was only four years old and too small to walk, rode on horseback on the blind horse. The family had baked a supply of bread before they left Columbiana County and stopped with friends in Medina County, Ohio, to do their laundering and to bake again. They drove through Massillon, Mansfield, and Toledo, Ohio, then crossed the line into Michigan

[6] David Eberly who died in 1942 at an advanced age (past eighty) told the writer that this was the arrangement. Leah Lehman Bechtel, wife of Deacon Jacob Bechtel and daughter of Bishop Abraham Lehman, insists that her father was ordained minister, never deacon, and that Myers had been ordained deacon.

driving through Hillsdale, Cold Water, and White Pigeon. They left their home in Columbiana County on April 18, 1848, and reached Elkhart County, May 4, 1848. They moved on a seventy-two acre farm west of New Paris which has been owned by Daniel Christophel and more recently by his son, Jesse Christophel. Twenty acres of the land had been cleared.

The family was poor and endured the same hardships as many of the other early settlers. Elizabeth Christophel did the housework while she was still quite young. Later on she did much weaving. Besides doing the weaving for the family she usually earned forty or fifty dollars each autumn weaving for other people. Had it not been for the money she earned in this way, they could scarcely have paid for the farm. All of their furniture was homemade and most of their clothing and household equipment were manufactured in the home.

The same year (1882) in which he was ordained bishop, Abraham Lehman attended the conference of the Wisler branch of the Mennonite Church at the Yellow Creek meetinghouse on May 19. He seems to have been accompanied to Indiana by John Markley and Jacob Nold and wife, from the Wisler Church in Medina County, Ohio. Preacher Michael Rohrer and wife, of the Medina County congregation, also seem to have been members of the party. It was at this conference that Jacob Wisler asked to have one of the younger men ordained to assist him in the office of bishop in Elkhart County. Christian Shaum was ordained bishop at that time.

Abraham Lehman died on January 5, 1900. Mrs. Lehman spent her last days with her daughter, Leah, and lived to the ripe old age of ninety-seven years. Leah Lehman and her husband, Jacob H. Bechtel, are members of the Old Order (Wisler) Mennonite Church in Elkhart County. Jacob Bechtel was ordained deacon of the Yellow Creek Mennonite (Wisler) Church in 1926.

Another Mennonite minister in Williams County was Levi Eberly. Jacob H. Eberly, father of Levi Eberly, was born in Elizabeth Township, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, as also was his wife, Katherine B. Eberly. Levi Eberly is remembered as a good preacher. He died September 19, 1894, and as already stated, was succeeded by Joseph Borkholder.

The last minister of the congregation was Joseph Borkholder. He was the son of Peter and Barbara Lehman Borkholder, referred to above, and was born near Manheim, Pennsylvania, March 30,

1830. As already stated, he came to Williams County with his parents in May, 1843. He grew to manhood in Williams County and in the autumn of 1855 went to Hardin County, Iowa, and entered a quarter section of government land. In 1859 he returned to Williams County and on January 22 of the same year was married to Catherine Hoffer, daughter of Bishop Isaac Hoffer. They settled on the Hoffer farm in Jefferson Township and resided there until their death. Soon after their marriage he and his wife united with the Mennonite Church. He was ordained to the ministry in 1894 and served the church located on his farm until the feebleness of old age overtook him. He is remembered in the neighborhood as a fine Christian and an excellent citizen. He served for many years as a veterinary surgeon. Bishop Eli Frey, of the Amish Mennonite Church in Fulton County, preached the funeral sermon.

For a time after Preacher Borkholder's death, ministers from the Amish Mennonite Church in Fulton County held an occasional service for the older people. The congregation always followed the strict Old Order of the Wisler Church and remained very plain in their dress and conservative in other practices. Most of the descendants of the old members of the church are now members of the Church of the Brethren. The German Reformed Congregation, which built a log church one and one-quarter miles east of the Hoffer cemetery in 1847, replaced the log church with a brick building in 1880. This also has disappeared.

After church services were discontinued in the church building, the benches were stored in the loft of the hog house on the Borkholder farm and whenever there were services the boys brought the benches into the house. The church had been painted white when it was new but the paint was never renewed after that and at the time that the building was removed it showed no evidence of ever having been painted. After services were no longer held in the building the children began to break out the windows. In order to preserve the memory of the building, David Eberly borrowed a camera and took a picture of it.

The church stood east and west with two doors on the north side. The door nearest the east end led into the church proper, the benches facing south with the men sitting on the east and the women on the west. The second door, near the west end of the church, led into a small anteroom which was used by the women. A door led from this anteroom into the main part of the church. Another room in the

south-west corner of the church was a counsel room for the ministers. Here the ministers met before services, and whenever there were young people who were receiving instruction preparatory to uniting with the church, they were instructed in this room.

One of the important uses of the room, however, was as a counsel room. Whenever the service preparatory to communion was held, each member in turn would go to the counsel room and report to the ministers whether he was in favor of holding the communion service at that time. In this room the members of the congregation were also consulted concerning matters of discipline, each member going into the room alone to deliver his opinion privately to the ministers. Voting for ministers was conducted in the same way, men and women having an equal voice in all matters. The benches in the main part of the building faced the pulpit on the south side and had no backs. A few short benches at the right and left of the pulpit faced the pulpit and were supplied with backs. These were occupied by the older members.

The Williams County meetinghouse has long since disappeared and the congregation, never large, is entirely gone. Descendants of the hardy pioneers of Williams County live in many states and are members of a number of different Christian denominations. Noah Lehman, son of Samuel and Elizabeth Lehman, is living in Fulton County, Ohio, and is a member of the Central Amish Mennonite Church. His grand-daughter is the wife of C. Warren Long, pastor of the Mennonite Church in Peoria, Illinois. A few of the descendants are living in Elkhart County, Indiana, where some are members of the Yellow Creek (Wisler) Mennonite Church. One of Levi Eberly's daughters, Catherine (Katie), lives north of Goshen. She and her husband, Daniel Pletcher, youngest son of the late Preacher Henry Pletcher formerly of Wood County, Ohio, attend the Pleasant View Mennonite Church. As already stated, most of those who remained in the local community are now members of the Church of the Brethren.

The first burials in the community were made on a small plot of ground about seventy-five rods south of the east and west road passing Isaac Hoffer's farm. The road to the cemetery led between his house and barn. Burials were made there at least as early as 1844. In January, 1855, Hoffer deeded a quarter of an acre "to the citizens of Jefferson Township, as a burying ground." The description states that the quarter acre is seventy-five rods south of the east

and west road and "a few rods south of our barn where it now stands." The plot was deeded "unto the citizens of this vicinity who wish to bury their dead there," and is described as four rods east and west and ten rods north and south. The deed also grants the privilege of driving to and from the cemetery across Isaac Hoffer's farm.

NOTES AND DISCUSSIONS

WILLIAM RITTENHOUSE, FIRST MENNONITE BISHOP IN AMERCA

Calvin Ira Kephart

It is unquestioned that Reverend William Rittenhouse (1644-1708) was the first Mennonite preacher in America, having been duly chosen by his coreligionists at the Germantown (Pa.) Mennonite Meetinghouse, the first church of this denomination in the New World, in the year 1690. For more than 50 years it has been said that he was also the first bishop of that group in America, but the accuracy of this assertion was questioned by Professor Harold S. Bender, of Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana, editor-in-chief of *The Mennonite Quarterly Review*, in an article in its January, 1933, issue, entitled, "Was William Rittenhouse the first Mennonite bishop in America." The present writer, however, holds the tradition to be correct. In that article Professor Bender reviewed all of the known documents on this subject and concluded that William Rittenhouse remained simply a preacher until his death and never became a bishop, but he welcomed any further evidence on the question. The writer has not learned of any additional evidence having been adduced in the meantime and shall consider the same series of facts and circumstances as those considered by Professor Bender and apply certain principles of logic and law in their interpretation. It is unfortunate that the records of the Germantown church were lost, as they doubtless would throw decisive light on the matter; moreover, we have not heard of any contemporaneous documents or publications that might aid us. We know of no tradition the one way or the other until the statement in the affirmative was made by D. K. Cassel in 1888. It is not known whether he possessed any such tradition or merely interpreted data before him. Under the circumtances, we are now left to decide the question from the available evidence and the apparent intention of the members of the congregation.

Rittenhouse served the Germantown congregation as the sole preacher from 1690 until 1702, when an election was held to choose two additional preachers and Jacob Gottschalk and Jan Neuss were so chosen. However, because of some difference shortly afterward, Neuss withdrew from the congregation, which left Gottschalk as the sole additional preacher. The number of worshippers then did not exceed 34, including preachers and deacons. Among the number were several who desired the rites of baptism and communion, and late in 1701 a member, Claes Berends, wrote to the ministers of his former congregation, the Hamburg-Altona Mennonite Church in Germany, suggesting that a bishop be sent to America to perform these rites. The authorities of the Altona congregation earnestly considered the matter, but no bishop was able or willing at that time to undertake the long, tedious, and hazardous voyage across the Atlantic to install a bishop at Germantown. Thereupon, in March, 1702, they wrote a letter to the Germantown congregation declining this suggestion and advising that

* Descendant of Rev. John Kephart (1751-1822), the builder and first preacher at the Doylestown (Pa.) Mennonite Meetinghouse (from about 1806).

congregation to proceed with its own ministers in the administration of the rites of baptism and communion when necessary, following the examples of Philip and Paul in the New Testament, who had baptized when not yet ordained as bishops, and admonishing them to pray that God might be with them in their undertaking and bless them in performing such duties. This letter was signed by four ministers of the Hamburg-Altona congregation, namely, Bishop Gerrit Roosen, aged 90 years, Pieter ver Helle, Jacob van Kampen, and Jean de Lanoi. It is now in the archives of the Mennonite Church at Amsterdam, Netherlands, and was first reported by Mrs. Anna Brons in her book entitled *Ursprung, Entwickelung und Schicksale der Taufgesinnten oder Mennoniten,* published at Norden, Germany, in 1884.

The Mennonite ministry is not a salaried profession. The ministers and deacons are ordained from among the qualified laity.[1] They are chosen by lot if more than one is nominated. The ministers are inducted into office by the laying on of hands by the officiating bishops. When chosen, acceptance of the office is deemed to be obligatory and the term is for life. They preach the Gospel and do certain pastoral work, such as visiting the sick. They continue to earn their living as they did before induction. The bishops are simply "confirmed" ministers.[1] They are chosen from the ministry to supervise a number of congregations in the respective districts. Unlike the ministers, they have full power to marry, baptize, and administer communion. Adult-baptism by sprinkling and not child baptism is followed.

We have heard no one question the sufficiency of the ordination of William Rittenhouse as a minister from the laity of his congregation. Before he could perform the episcopal duties of a bishop, he had to be chosen as such and be *confirmed* by a duly ordained bishop or by higher church authority. Wenger (page 41) states that the above-named Jacob Gottschalk was the first American Mennonite bishop, but his jurisdiction in that office rested on the same authority from Europe as that granted to Rittenhouse; so we are forced to the conclusion that either both were bishops or neither was such. This assertion is inescapable. The word "ordain" means "to *invest* with ministerial or sacerdotal functions; to *appoint* or *consecrate* officially as a minister in a Christian church; to *appoint* to a duty or office."[2] Rittenhouse having been duly chosen or ordained, the only remaining act to enable him to perform episcopal duties was that of *confirmation.* Certainly, Bishop Roosen, of Altona, had ample authority to confirm a bishop at Germantown if he could have come to America, but, because of his extreme age and the difficult circumstances of the time, he acted under that authority by attempting to commission or confirm Rittenhouse by letter to the church, attesting the letter by the signatures of three other ministers of his district. A mere letter of advice would not have been so formally executed. However, the communication was deemed by Rittenhouse not to be sufficiently specific; he modestly considered the comparison of himself with Philip and Paul to be an undue compliment and refrained from assuming the duties of a bishop. He well knew the rules of his denomination and was of the opinion that

[1] John C. Wenger, *History of the Mennonites of the Franconia Conference,* Telford, Pa., 1937, p. 40; also *Dordrecht Confession of Faith, ibid.,* p. 449.

[2] Webster's *Collegiate Dictionary,* 5th Ed., 1941; *Thorndike-Century Junior Dictionary,* 1935.

more formal confirmation by the church hierarchy should be forthcoming to justify his taking this step.

By 1706 the situation at Germantown had become urgent and late that year the congregation again wrote to Europe for instructions; but this time the letter went to the authorities of the Mennonite churches of the Netherlands at Amsterdam, who referred the letter to the ministers of the Hamburg-Altona congregation, doubtless because reference had been made to the previous letter from them. The response under date of April 16, 1707, unfortunately now lost, signed by the ministers of the Hamburg-Altona congregation and countersigned by the co-ministers of the Mennonite churches of Amsterdam, gave unequivocal instruction to the church to direct Rittenhouse to proceed with the baptisms, solely an episcopal function, vesting full authority in him to do so. Let us quote from the Germantown congregation's letter of acknowledgment to Amsterdam under date of September 3, 1708, for this excerpt is the crux of the whole question:

> Your very welcome writing of April 16, 1707, signed by the ministers of Hamburg and Altona and by you and with your full approval, has come to hand. We have well understood your good instruction, and the letter gave us sufficient answer and was with joy received by our aged preacher, Willem Rittinghuysen. He was accordingly fully resolved to serve with baptism, upon their desire, those who were requesting it and had requested it. . . .

This document from the church authorities in Europe constituted the necessary confirmation of the congregation's choice of Rittenhouse as their first bishop. It was plenary in its effect. It did not attempt to create an intermediate or hybrid or a temporary office for Rittenhouse. It was definite and was deemed by all concerned to be wholly sufficient for the purpose intended. No doubt can be entertained on this score. *It gave joy to the aged preacher, who then was fully resolved to proceed with the duties that only a bishop of the church regularly had the right to perform;* in fact, the congregation had made certain that there should be no short-cuts in this respect, as indicated in the acknowledgment of September 3, 1708. If we assume that it required as long as four months for this letter of authority or confirmation to reach Germantown, it was in the hands of the congregation by August, 1707, or six months prior to Rittenhouse's death on February 18, 1708.

At this stage of the inquiry, the methods of legal analysis become helpful. What was the intention of all of the parties concerned and was that intention achieved? This is the sole essential question. What constitutes an ordained preacher a bishop, the selection by the church and the confirmation by adequate authority as such or the subsequent performance of baptism or other episcopal rites? Is it the state's certificate or the subsequent trial of a case or the treatment of a patient that makes one a lawyer or a doctor? Isn't one a preacher the very moment that he is duly vested with authority to preach? Isn't a soldier an officer as soon as he is duly commissioned and sworn in, regardless of when or what duties he may perform later by virtue of his commission? Actually, we are not concerned here with the kind or number of episcopal acts that Rittenhouse may have performed after his confirmation. Senators have been appointed and duly sworn in

but have died before the legislature convened. Judges have been appointed and taken the required oath but have been prevented from performing court duty by untimely death or other occurrence. Nonetheless, they were duly qualified public officers, ready for service. Here there was adequate ordination to office, confirmation, and acceptance—a meeting of the minds concerned. The high church government appealed to had the right to confirm the Germantown church's choice of Rittenhouse in the most fitting manner at its command, which was by formal letter, a method recognized always as highly suitable for important acts by both religious and civil authorities. All of these acts were sufficient to constitute Rittenhouse a bishop; they authorized him to perform baptisms, probably the highest duty of a bishop, as was intended by both the congregation and the European church hierarchy. Outsiders had no legal right to object. How can we say less and thereby attempt to diminish the intended effect of the acts of the participants? Since we cannot, then the question is completely answered. In a communication to the writer, Professor Bender concedes "that acceptance by Rittenhouse of the authority to perform baptism is clear and is the equivalent to performance of the act, in significance for the issue under discussion."

It is argued that "ordination (as a bishop) is an ecclesiastical act performed in person by a bishop *by the laying on of hands* and that it cannot be performed by a long-distance procedure; that the only way Rittenhouse could have been ordained in the Mennonite Church or any other church is by the *personal* action of a higher ecclesiastical official." If this be accepted, it follows that, since there was no physical 'laying on of hands' in the case of either Rittenhouse or Gottschalk, grave uncertainty would exist as to when the Germantown district actually did have a real bishop. Fortunately for Mennonite history, this view cannot be accepted. A bishop being a confirmed preacher and the necessary confirmation having come from duly-constituted European church hierarchy, *which may waive impossible ritualistic formalities whenever it may see fit to do so* (witness that freqently done by the Roman Catholic hierarchy), we are forced to the conclusion that Rittenhouse was adequately constituted a bishop of the Mennonite Church, as was intended to be accomplished by all of the participants.

We know of no written constitution of the Mennonite Church in either Europe or America in 1707 or for many years thereafter. Modern practice may be more formal than it was then; such is the evolution of all religious systems. Witness the extreme simplicity of the primitive Christian church organizations. Therefore, it is doubtful whether we are justified in applying the present rules to acts performed by the church authorities under the rigors of colonial circumstances 235 years ago. It has never been suggested that the authorization from Europe was intended to have Rittenhouse act as a temporary bishop. Even if so, then he would have been a bishop in the full sense while thus acting. During the present war, practically all army officers are serving under temporary promotions to higher grades; can one argue that a temporary colonel is not a colonel in every sense insofar as the performance of his duties is concerned? Obviously, no subordinate would question such authority reposed in him by his government. Gottschalk performed the baptisms that Rittenhouse would have carried out if

he had lived. These very acts are the basis on which Gottschalk is listed as a bishop of the church, but no one ever has asserted that he served as a temporary bishop. In fact, the long delay and unwillingness on Rittenhouse's part to perform episcopal acts without clear and sufficient authority from the church hierarchy in Europe, of itself, is adequate demonstration that the subject under consideration was that now in question, regardless of whether as a temporary or permanent bishop. What less important subject could have induced all this solemnity of correspondence with the European churches? None that we can conceive. Why should confirmation by such a formal letter as that finally received be rated as inferior to confirmation 'by the laying on of hands' by one of the same bishops who signed that letter? We know of no reason, ecclesiastical or legal. Clearly, Rittenhouse was more than a *de facto* bishop; he was a *de jure* bishop, having been duly confirmed and having publicly accepted the office, as proved by the foregoing quotation.

Baptisms in this Mennonite congregation were made only at infrequent intervals and Rittenhouse undoubtedly performed other episcopal duties than baptism between the time of his acceptance of the office and of his death. Surely, various administrative acts had currently to be performed by him in his supervisory capacity. He may have officiated at marriages and communion services. But, whether he did or did not is not controlling; the sole question here is that as to whether he was duly confirmed as a bishop, and the answer must be in the affirmative. It should not be overlooked that Rittenhouse was probably the leading member of this historic community and worthy of the fullest confidence and trust of both his coreligionists and fellow-citizens.

Let us carry the matter a little further. Several days before Rittenhouse died, "he gave a brief admonition," as Gottschalk states. One definition of 'admonition' is "an instruction of duties." It is not asserted that this admonition was delivered from the pulpit. It may have been given on his deathbed and in such event could well have been an instruction of duties to his anticipated successor in office, Gottschalk, for the latter actually was chosen by the congregation and in his subsequent letter he stated that "we went ahead with the administration of baptism to those who desired it." These baptisms occurred on May 9, 1708, but, before Gottschalk proceeded to do so, he apparently also raised the same question that Rittenhouse did regarding the sufficiency of his authority to perform episcopal rites. But the congregation, in the light of the confirmation of Rittenhouse from Europe and apparently of Rittenhouse's final relations with Gottschalk, adjudged that sufficient authority existed and directed Gottschalk to proceed. It is on the basis of his having done so that he is rated as a bishop of the church, although his authority was precisely the same as that on which Rittenhouse finally expressed his willingness to act. There is not the slightest evidence of any Mennonite bishop's having come from Europe to ordain him or of any letter from the church hierarchy in Europe authorizing him so to act. In Mennonite church polity there was absolutely no way in which the Germantown congregation could create him a bishop except on the authority received in Rittenhouse's case. Therefore, it is conclusive that this congregation must have decided that the chain of episcopal authority was sufficient to embrace the terms of these two preachers from the date of

receipt by the church of the final letter from Europe about August, 1707. Seemingly, this question was not raised in the church ever afterward.

It is a familiar axiom of law that, whenever words or acts are susceptible of contradictory interpretation, one consistent with the evident intention of the parties and the other contrary thereto, the former must prevail.[3] That rule has peculiar application here, where the facts and circumstances readily admit of such interpretation as will make the successive acts of the Germantown congregation in its primitive history consistent with the evident intention of its members and of the high church authorities in Europe and there are no positive acts or circumstances of record that conflict with such interpretation.

Undoubtedly, numerous situations of this kind have arisen in the course of human events. If a principle at variance to that adduced above had prevailed, clearly it would be known to civil and religious authorities by a series of decisions, but such is not the case; in fact, the contrary is the rule. No serious attempt has been made here to list cases analogous to that considered above, but one or two at hand may be cited in further support, such as that reviewed by the Reverend Horace K. Mann in *The Lives of the Popes in the Early Middle ages* (1902), volume 1, Part II, pages 290-291. In that instance a certain priest named Stephen was elected bishop of Rome in 752, immediately upon the death of Bishop Zachary. That was a generation before the consummation of the Papacy about 775. Stephen was inducted into the Lateran Palace, but he died four days afterward and before his formal consecration. He was the second Stephen in the list of Roman bishops. Roman Catholic historians, in creating a simulated papal organization backward from about 775, have classed all prior bishops of Rome as popes. Some of the writers have omitted this Stephen, which has resulted in confusion in the numbers assigned to those of this name.

Father Mann presents important reasons for enumerating this obscure bishop as Pope Stephen II, observing (probably under canonical law) that "we hold that election on the one hand and consent on the other are enough to make a pope. From the time at least of St. Benedict II, the popes-elect have exercised full jurisdiction in the church and hence were acting as heads of the church as popes." Then, too, he continues, "in the official list of the popes published yearly in the *Diario* (Almanac) the number II is affixed to the (above) Stephen whose name is omitted by many in their lists of the popes; and, as still further showing the tradition of the Roman Church, the portrait of the Stephen who reigned but three days appears among the mosaic medallions of the popes which adorn the basilica of St. Paul outside-of-the-walls." He was succeeded by another Stephen, officially called Stephen III but by some church historians as Stephen II in disregard of the above Stephen.

It would be most unfortunate if primitive Mennonite Church history in America should be encumbered by a similar disagreement among its historians in the light of all of the circumstances portrayed herein.

Of recent memory is the case of the present Duke of Windsor, who reigned less than a year as sovereign of the British Empire although he never was officially crowned. The formality of coronation is a traditional act of

[3] Bouvier's *Law Dictionary,* Baldwin's Students' Edition (1934), under "Interpretation," page 584.

royalty from primitive times, yet it would have added nothing to the authority of the late King Edward VIII and its absence did not cause his abdication to be the less a fact.

Consequently, we hold that Cassel committed no error when in 1888 he dedicated his *History of Mennonites* to the memory of William Rüddinghuysen (Rittenhouse), First Mennonite Bishop in America," but the date of his ordination to that office was not in 1701, as asserted, but, we may safely say, about August, 1707.[4] On similar grounds, Gottschalk may be accounted as the second bishop.

WAS THE AUTHORIZATION OF WILLIAM RITTENHOUSE TO PERFORM BAPTISMS EQUIVALENT TO ORDINATION AS BISHOP IN THE MENNONITE CHURCH?

A Reply to Dr. Kephart

Harold S. Bender

Dr. Kephart has written a thorough and careful paper in his attempt to make the written authorization to perform baptisms, conveyed to the Germantown Mennonite Church (William Rittenhouse) in 1707 by Mennonite elders in Germany and Holland, equivalent to ordination as a bishop in the Mennonite Church, in order to prove that, inasmuch as Rittenhouse did accept the authority and would have exercised it, had he not died before the spring 1708 baptismal period, he was in fact the first Mennonite bishop in America. The Review welcomes his contribution, and believes that he has made the best possible case for his contention. If Rittenhouse was the first bishop in fact (and we would be glad to believe it), he deserves all the credit. The disagreement between Dr. Kephart and myself does not concern matters of fact, since we are agreed on the evidence, but solely the interpretation of this evidence. Dr. Kephart approaches the problem primarily from the legal point of view, adducing legal arguments and precedents. The writer approaches it primarily from the broader historical point of view. With this background in mind, let us examine Dr. Kephart's argument.

1. We note in the first place Dr. Kephart's admission that the letter of 1702, which is the sole ground for Cassel's claim that Rittenhouse was a bishop, does not in fact prove the claim. We are therefore restricted to the 1707 letter as the sole source of evidence on which Dr. Kephart bases his claim to Rittenhouse's episcopal ordination. However we do not have the text of the original 1707 letter from Holland regarding Rittenhouse's supposed appointment to the bishop's office, and accordingly are restricted to

[4] For the latest information on Rittenhouse European antecendents, see *Rittenhouse Genealogy Debunked,* by this author, in *National Genealogical Society Quarterly,* December, 1938.

the brief comments in the Gottschalk statement of later date as quoted in the 1708 letter. Nothing written by Gottschalk specifically mentions that the office of bishop or elder was assigned to either Rittenhouse or himself. We must therefore fall back on an interpretation of the total situation and the behaviour of the persons involved.

2. Dr. Kephart's argument is handicapped by his failure to give proper weight to historical Mennonite tradition and practice. Since he is not versed in this field, he does not realize how much he depends on the interpretation of legal and ecclesiastical precedents and terms with which he is familiar and which has validity in its own proper sphere but does not have decisive bearing on Mennonite life and practice.

3. We grant the claim that failure to perform the functions of an officer does not prove that the office was not held. The fact that Rittenhouse died before he could carry through any episcopal functions would not prove that he had never held the episcopal office. The reader will note in my 1933 article that I used the fact of non-performance of episcopal functions chiefly to refute the Cassel claim of episcopal ordination in 1702. Since Dr. Kephart grants that Cassel was wrong, this point may be dropped. We agree that acceptance by Rittenhouse of the authority to perform baptism is clear, and is the equivalent, in significance for the issue under discussion, to performance of the act.

4. There is a confusion in Dr. Kephart's use of the terms "confirm" and "confirmation" as applied to the office of bishop. It is true that "bishops are simply confirmed ministers," confirmed being in this case a translation of the German word "bestätigt," which is taken from Dr. Wenger's Franconia history. "Confirmed" in this sense is a *terminus technicus,* and does not have the same meaning as the usual meaning of "confirm," namely "to reassure" or "to make certain." "Confirmation" is an official ecclesiastical act, and includes a charge, a prayer of dedication, a commitment of function, and a laying on of hands. The Mennonite Church knows of no procedure of confirmation by letter or in any other way except by personal act of a superior ecclesiastical officer, namely an ordained bishop.

This is true both in the present and in the past history of the Mennonite Church. The letter from Europe may have "constituted the necessary confirmation of the congregation's choice of Rittenhouse as their first bishop" in the sense used by Dr. Kephart, but this confirmation would have been only an approval. It would not have meant the conferring of an office. The right to perform functions of a bishop can be granted by letter, or by word of mouth, and has often been so granted in past and present Mennonite history, but the right to perform the function of an office does not constitute the possession of the office. Dr. Kephart asserts the contrary, claiming that "these acts were sufficient to constitute Rittenhouse a bishop," doing so in ignorance of Mennonite ecclesiastical procedure. There is no ground for his assertion that this "was intended by both the congregation and the European church hierarchy," or that "here there was adequate ordination to office, confirmation, and acceptance." I do not "attempt to diminish the intended effect of the acts of the participants." I rather object to Dr. Kephart's claim that he knows what the intention was in the minds of the participants. This can only be defined in the light of a thorough knowledge of Mennonite history.

5. Dr. Kephart rightly claims that to reject Rittenhouse's right to the office of bishop means a rejection of Jacob Gottschalk's right to be bishop, on the basis of the evidence at hand. To this the writer agrees. Gottschalk can not be assigned the office of bishop by Dr. Wenger or any other historian on the basis of the 1707 letter from Europe or on the basis of the statement of 1708 by Gottschalk himself. However, Gottschalk may have been ordained by a later immigrant bishop from Europe, and may have performed the functions of a bishop continuously for a number of years without holding the ecclesiastical office corresponding to the function.

6. We are willing to agree with Dr. Kephart that both Rittenhouse and Gottschalk were *de facto* bishops, but we insist that this fact does not make them *de jure* bishops in Mennonite ecclesiastical polity.

7. Dr. Kephart further seeks to interpret the "brief admonition" which Rittenhouse gave on his deathbed as "an instruction of duties." He says that this admonition could well have been an instruction of duties to his anticipated successor in office (Gottschalk). We submit that such an interpretation of "admonition" is, to say the least, forced, and cannot be used as evidence for the argument in any case. It was not at all uncommon for aged Mennonite ministers about to die to leave a farewell message in admonitory form to their children, friends, and parishioners. Goshen College Library has two printed farewell admonitions from Mennonite ministers in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, who died many years ago. The natural interpretation of "a brief admonition" would be that of a brief farewell message on spiritual things to the members of the church, and not an ecclesiastical instruction, though the latter cannot be excluded.

8. In the final analysis, the practice of the civil courts or of the civil state proves nothing as to the practice of the church, particularly of the Mennonite Church. Neither does the practice of the Roman Catholic Church prove anything. The decisive weight of evidence must be the tradition, practice, and constitution of the Mennonite church in regard to the office of bishop and the performance of episcopal duties. First, we must admit, the modern practice may not equal ancient practice and changes may have taken place. We have no written discipline or constitution of the Mennonite Church in America in 1708, nor in fact until much later. Nor have we such for the Mennonite Church in Europe at that time. From a Mennonite historian's general knowledge of these facts however, which Dr. Kephart will no doubt accept, it must be said that there is no evidence that any Mennonite ordination to the office of bishop has ever been made at long range by letter, and further, that it would be contrary to all precedent for a Mennonite minister to claim to have received such an office by letter. On the other hand, there is abundant precedent for the fact that a bishop or a congregation can authorize a minister to perform the functions of a bishop in the absence of a bishop, without thereby in any sense assuming or receiving the office of a bishop. Many a bishop has authorized a minister to perform baptisms or marriages or to conduct the rites of the Lord's Supper and other ecclesiastical ordinances. It would be altogether in line with Mennonite tradition, which is the only factor that can possibly be decisive in the Rittenhouse case, for European Mennonite elders to authorize the young Mennonite congregation at Germantown to proceed with the

ecclesiastical business of the church by appointing its minister to perform episcopal functions until such a time as a bishop could be duly ordained.

In conclusion, two points should be mentioned. Dr. Kephart seems to equate "chosen'" with "ordained" when he says "Rittenhouse having been duly chosen or ordained the only remaining act . . . was that of "confirmation." He should equate "confirmation" and "ordination," for election (choice) precedes ordination. Finally, the extract of the letter of 1708, quoted by Dr. Kephart, calls Rittenhouse "our aged preacher," not "elder." The well-known Mennonite title or name for bishop in 1708 was "elder." If Dr. Kephart's theory is correct, the 1708 letter should have called Rittenhouse "elder."

BOOK REVIEWS

Die älteste Chronik der Hutterischen Brüder. Ein Sprachdenkmal aus frühneuhochdeutscher Zeit. Herausgegeben von A. J. F. Zieglschmid, Northwestern University. Philadelphia, Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation, 1943. 1145 pages, 20 plates, $10.00.

If the old proverb, that books also have their own particular fates, comes true anywhere it certainly does in the case of the book under review. The larger chronicle of the Hutterite Brotherhood has a history of its own almost as remarkable as that of the group itself. Begun early in the sixteenth century and continued until 1665 as a record of the history and testimonies of the Brethren, it was carried along by them as their most precious possession through all their long and hazardous pilgrimage until it found its last haven in the so-called colonies (*Bruderhöfe*) of this group in South Dakota. Several abridged manuscripts of this history have been preserved in European libraries, confiscated by the Jesuits in their zeal for conversion, and these codices have received the careful attention of many a scholar, but the original chronicle itself was long thought to be lost. In the 1880's Joseph von Beck of Vienna with great pains reconstructed from the smaller codices the original story with its manifold ramifications. His publication, *Die Geschicht-Bücher der Österreichischen Wiedertäufer* (1883), became a work of lasting value and a mine of information. Eventually it led to the rediscovery of the Hutterites in America by John Horsch, and later by Rudolf Wolkan. Beck's edition of the chronicle (or, as he puts it in the plural, the chronicles) was soon out of print, and the brethren in Dakota and Canada desired a new edition, this time based on the original text. Professor Rudolf Wolkan of Vienna, an outstanding scholar in the field of Anabaptist hymnology, undertook the intricate task of preparing this new edition, for which the brethren supplied a carefully prepared copy of the original. This volume, published in 1923, forty years after Beck's edition, presented the text in a somewhat modernized form, since it was intended to serve as a household book for the Hutterian communities. Although published in a large edition, it soon went out of print, for it was not only appreciated on the "Bruderhöfe," but was also recognized by many church historians as a first rate historical source for Anabaptism.

And now, twenty years later, something strange has happened; a Germanic philologist of Northwestern University, Evanston-Chicago, Professor A. J. F. Zieglschmid, who is neither a church historian nor has any relation to Mennonites or Anabaptists, and who has never before heard anything about the Hutterites, finds in the course of research on a far-fetched literary subject interesting comments on this brotherhood and its supposedly lost chronicle. Being an ardent student of the development of the Early High German, he is greatly intrigued by the idea of being on the track of an unknown but promising source in this field, and accordingly undertakes a long trip to South Dakota, spying out the whereabouts of this to him hitherto completely unknown group. His aggressive undertaking is richly rewarded; he finds the original manuscript of the much discussed chronicle, a large volume of about six hundred leaves, preserved in fine condition in

spite of its long travels over two continents and through several centuries. The Brethren were well pleased at the interest of this strange scholar and entrusted to him their precious book for an entire year that he might copy it for a new edition. And now it is published—the very first letter-perfect edition of the original, although in another sense it is the third edition of this extraordinary book within three score years.

We are very grateful to all those who helped to bring about this result, to the Brethren, to the untiring endeavor of the editor, and not least to the generosity of the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation in Philadelphia which made the whole undertaking financially possible. The result is a stately volume of more than eleven hundred pages which includes twenty plates of photographic samples of the manuscript pages intended to give some idea of the highly developed penmanship of the original scribes. There is no doubt that this new publication has its unique merits both for the church historian and the philologian in general as well as for Mennonites and friends of Anabaptism in particular. That it was possible to bring out such a large volume of sixteenth century German during these present war times, is not only a tribute to America's scholarship but also to American idealism. The publication will not only serve to increase appreciation for the American Germans and their rich cultural heritage but will add fresh stimulus to the study of the Hutterites and Anabaptism in general. After all, Anabaptism in a broader sense is one of the contributory factors in the building of American culture.

Before undertaking an evaluation of the new edition, we should first report in brief on its contents. The Hutterite Chronicle is a work truly unique of its kind. No other church group has anything comparable to this continuous minute record of a much persecuted but staunch Christian group, running from the very beginning almost to the present day, for the Chronicle under review is but the first part of the entire historical material of the brotherhood. The "Smaller" Chronicle (*Kleingeschichtbuch*) covering the period from 1665 to far into the nineteenth century, has also been faithfully preserved and is now in the possession of the South Dakota colonies. In fact, the Brethren have an unusually strong sense of history. As early as 1538, one brother Braitmichel started recording their experiences and testimonies, after outlining a broad introduction on the history of mankind "vom Anfang der Welt" until the year 1523, taken largely from Sebastian Franck's famous *Chronika . . . und Geschichtbibel* (1531). The story then continues with utmost accuracy, full of touching details about the life, faith, suffering and steadfastness of the brethren amidst all the hardships and ordeals of a most intolerant world. Many letters from brethren in prisons or on missions throughout the lands of the German tongue are interspersed in the text; in fact, more than one fifth of the whole contents is made up of such material, including epistles and confessions of all kinds, (*Rechenschaften*). Facing death at the stake or in rotten dungeons, the faith of these true Christian disciples never failed and became a great testimony and challenge. As a whole, the chronicle reveals the story of the "suffering church" of Christ, and in a sense does this in a more living way than the better known *Martyrs' Mirror* (1660) of the Dutch Mennonites written by van Braght. It is *the* great document of the Anabaptist genius at its best. No scholar reading this book solely for scholarly purposes has escaped be-

ing deeply impressed by its spiritual qualities which are as fresh today as they were centuries ago. It is certainly no mere chance that this book has been preserved and been permitted three modern editions. And it is still more encouraging to know that the Hutterian Brotherhood itself has survived all the vicissitudes of its pilgrimage, and still continues with its witness to the modern world.

As we now turn to a discussion of the particulars of the new edition as compared with the earlier ones, the major point of emphasis must be the decidedly new feature: the letter-perfect or diplomatic method of editing. By this method, the printed text is made to coincide almost photographically with the original down to the minutest details. Professor Zieglschmid's thoroughness and accuracy in this type of editing is well-known from his publications in *the Mennonite Quarterly Review* ("Unpublished Sixteenth Century Letters of the Hutterian Brethren," 1941; "A Song about the Persecution of the Hutterian Brethren, etc.", 1943). In the preface of the present book he describes his meticulous endeavor to guarantee a maximum of exactitude. It is indeed astonishing that such an immense task could be achieved within a relatively brief period, and it should not be astonishing at all that, in spite of all possible precautions against errors (use of a magnifying glass and the like), a few slight mistakes should creep in. Thus, for instance, on page VII (and also XXVI) the name of the ninth bishop (*Vorsteher*) of the brotherhood is erroneously given as Ulrich Laussling instead of the correct Ulrich Jaussling.

Another feature of great value, particularly for those interested in the language, is the extensive glossary of rare or obsolete words (74 pages). This is another proof of Professor Zieglschmid's unwearying industry and thorough scholarship. The same linguistic interest naturally characterizes many footnotes which give the meaning and derivation of words. Besides the linguistic notes there are others offering factual information largely taken from Beck's rich annotations but often corrected according to more recent research. The index of places (14 pages) is far more thorough than the similar index of the 1923 Wolkan edition. In this regard the book by Frantisek Hruby, *Die Wiedertäufer in Mähren* (Leipzig, 1935), was of particular assistance, since it identifies many locations of Hutterite history with the greatest care and reliability.

Another fine feature of the book is the bibliography of seventeen pages, the first rather comprehensive one on Anabaptism and Hutterianism in the English language. No claim is made to exhaustiveness, yet the main material (in particular the American part) is collected for further use. The chief omission is C. Henry Smith's books with the one exception of his *Coming of the Russian Mennonites.*

Having appraised the fine qualities of Zieglschmid's *magnum opus* a few words also may be said about the book from a critical angle. First and above all, the fact remains that the editor approaches his task from a point of view which is not only unfamiliar but downright unpopular among church historians, namely the linguistic one. The title page itself reveals this approach by characterizing the chronicle as a *Sprachdenkmal aus frühneuhochdeutscher Zeit* (a "linguistic monument of the Early New High German period"). This characterization is appropriate for the philologian, but I must confess that although I have now been working with the entire mass

of Hutterite material since 1922, never once did it occur to me to view these writings as linguistic monuments, although I liked the style very much. It is the genius, the idea, the testimony, which actually matters to the historian. For this reason the title as well as parts of the introduction seemed somewhat unusual to me, although one readily grants to the editor the legitimacy of his approach. The fact remains that no one can read these records without being touched by their spiritual power quite apart from the formal aspect of their presentation.

Another point of criticism might be the endeavor for extreme letter-perfection in reproduction. The church historian as such has not too much use for spelling peculiarities but rather prefers a simplified text edition, such as, for instance, the German *Verein für Reformationsgeschichte* adopted in its *Quellen zur Geschichte der Wiedertäufer,* and as is found in Lydia Müller's: *Glaubenszeugnisse oberdeutscher Taufgesinnten.* However, it must be remembered that the editor pursued a twofold purpose, the philological and the historical, and certainly the philologians will be grateful to the author for such an excellent volume. However, occasionally the method produces some strange consequences, such as, e. g. when a capitalized title head suddenly contains a small round fractur "r" which seems quite impossible from my knowledge of Hutterite manuscripts.

It is to be regretted that the book has no subject index. Professor Zieglschmid informs me that he intended to present such an index and that part of it was already prepared when it was decided by the sponsors to omit it because of its bulk (over a hundred pages) which would have made the book larger and more expensive. A good index would have made the volume much more usable.

Finally, a few minor points should be noted for the sake of completeness as they occurred to me in leafing through the volume. Note (1) on page 316 speaks of a *Sendbrief* to the Moravian nobles as probably coming from the pen of Peter Riedemann. The document referred to is not an "epistle," but one of the basic doctrinal pronouncements of the Hutterite brotherhood, the famous *Fünf Artikel,* a product of the Gabrieler controversy, and its author (or better redactor) is not Peter Riedemann, but Peter Walpot (cf. *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte,* v. XXVIII, 1931, p. 94 ff.). A note on page 317 mentions the imperial diet mandate of the sixteenth century against the Anabaptists; the completed text is now easily available in the first part of *Quellen zur Geschichte der Wiedertäufer, I, Herzogthum Württemberg,* (1930). As for the "Apotheker Simon" (pages 441 and 446), we learn from Wotschke, *Geschichte der Reformation in Polen,* 1911, pp. 219-227, that this was Simon Ronemberg, a well known elder of the Unitarian church of Poland. The story of Salomon Böger (or Beger), p. 645, occupies not more than eleven lines, but is actually of greater significance than the chronicle indicates; an extensive Hutterite manuscript on his journeys in Turkey between 1607 and 1610 is extant which nicely supplements the chronicle text (cf. Robert Friedmann, "Adventures of an Anabaptist in Turkey, 1607-1610," *Menn. Quart. Rev.,* XVII, 1943, pp. 73 ff.).

A minor point escaped the editor on page XIII of the introduction, where he reports that Professor Loserth is preparing the "Smaller Chronicle" (*Kleingeschichtbuch*), mentioned above, for publication. It is true that

Loserth earnestly wished he could do this job, as he told me in 1929, and that he actually prepared some preliminary material. But in the 30's Eberhard Arnold took over this task (without achieving more than the printing of the first 64 pages), and in 1936 Loserth died almost ninety years of age.

However, the desire for the publication of this continuation of the Hutterian chronicle from 1665 onward remains and might well be voiced again at the end of our review. According to Loserth's characterization of this *Kleingeschichtbuch* (*Menn. Quart. Rev.*, v. IV, 1930, pp. 93 ff.), it must be a book of the highest value, worthy to be made known to all interested circles. Therefore, if there is anything to be added to our congratulations to Professor Zieglschmid for the completion of his splendid work, it is the urgent invitation to plan now the edition of this second volume of the Hutterite records. Even if its linguistic yield should be smaller than that of the first volume (the manuscript comes from about 1800), its historical revelations might still be the greater, and thus truly rewarding.

Robert Friedmann

EDITORIAL

(Concluded from page 4)

History of the Mennonites in Ontario (1935)) lists a surprising number of these lost churches in Ontario. In the course of his studies on Ohio Mennonites John Umble has likewise found a considerable number in that state. The REVIEW expects to publish a series of articles from his pen telling the story of several of these communities, beginning with Williams County in the current issue. Wood and Seneca County will follow later. In his usual thorough and painstaking manner Professor Umble has gathered every scrap of information available at this late date in spite of the considerable handicaps which always plague the student of the dead who are unhonored and unsung in the records.

THE REVIEW IS GLAD TO PUBLISH a defense of William Rittenhouse as the first Mennonite bishop in America offered by Dr. C. I. Kephart of Washington, D. C. Dr. Kephart has made the strongest possible case for his position, and one that merits consideration. Inasmuch as it constitutes a critique of the 1933 REVIEW article on this theme by H. S. Bender, the latter has contributed a brief reply to Dr. Kephart. The parallel publication of the two articles should serve to clarify the issue and enable students in this field to draw their own conclusion.